



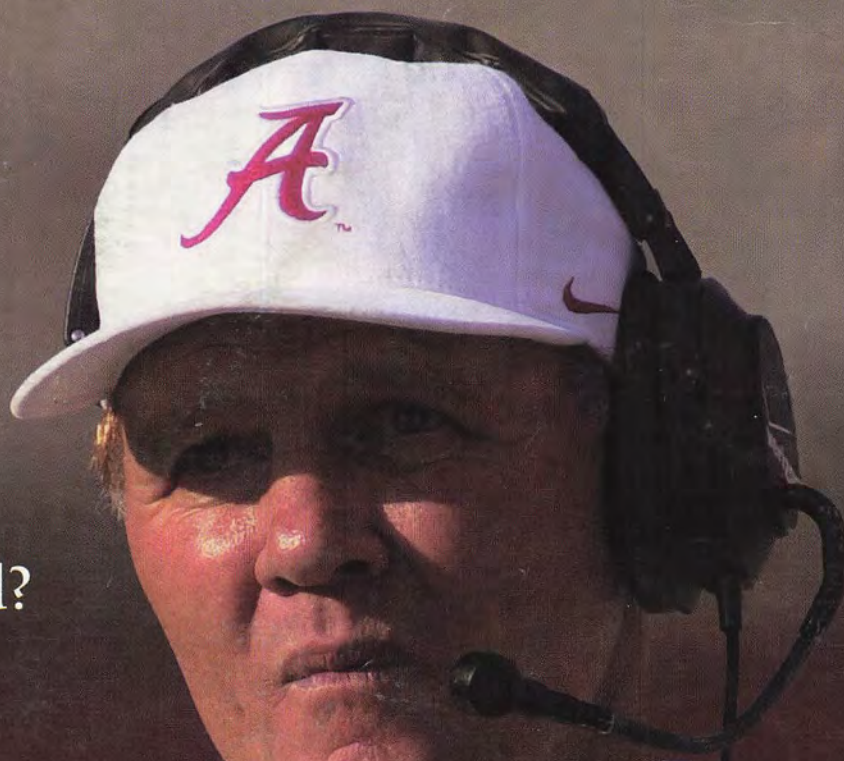
INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE

NOVEMBER, 2000
VOLUME 22, NUMBER 9

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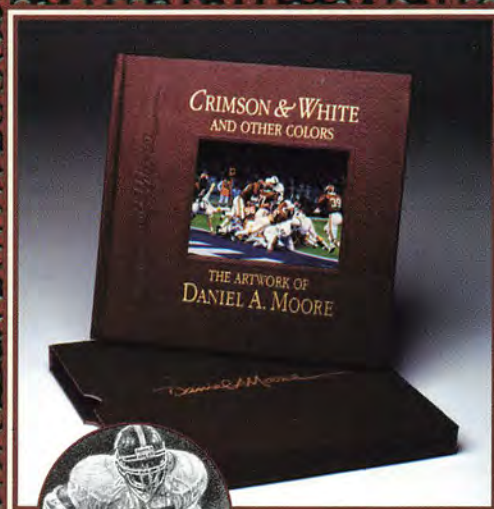
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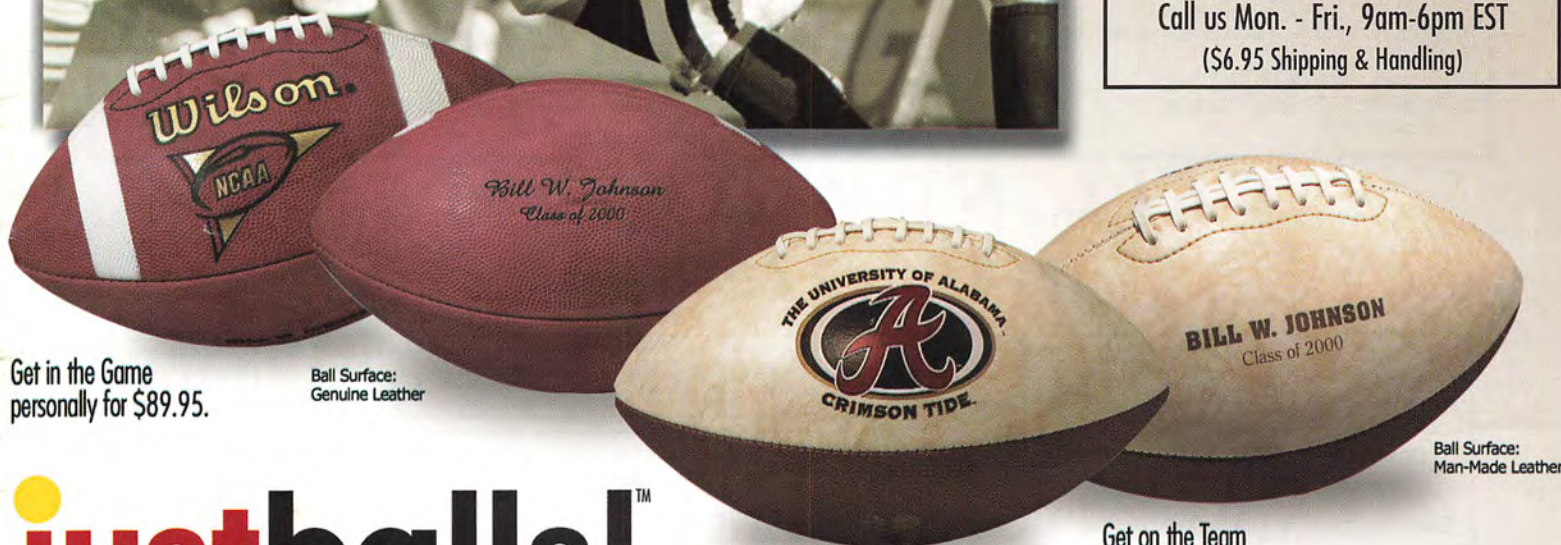
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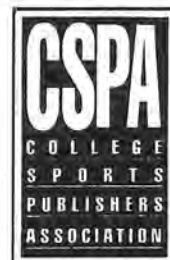
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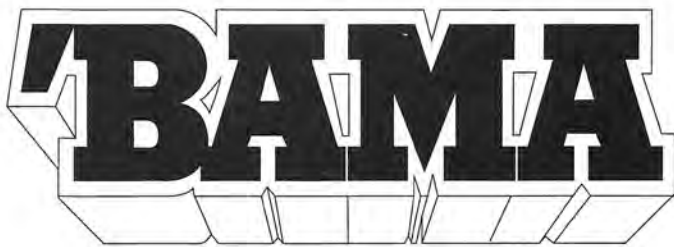
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INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE

NOVEMBER, 2000

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BAMA SCORECARD

Tyler Watts

Quarterback Tyler Watts became the fifth Alabama player to be injured and lost for the season since last spring. Watts went down with a season-ending knee injury on the fourth play of Alabama's game against Ole Miss in Tuscaloosa's Bryant-Denny Stadium. Following surgery by Dr. James Andrews at HealthSouth in Birmingham, it was announced that the operation had been a success, that Watts would soon begin rehabilitation, and that he would be able to take part in limited work in the spring. He is expected to be 100 per cent when fall practice begins next year. He will be a junior in 2001.

Earlier this year Alabama had lost tight end Terry Jones with a knee injury, tailback Antonio Beard with a shoulder injury, defensive end Kindal Moorehead with an achilles tear, and fullback Jeremy Walker with a career-ending back injury.

Football Commitments

Although only the most die-hard fans are keeping close tabs on Alabama football recruiting these days (with the exception of Brodie Croyle and Carnell Williams watches), the Tide is beginning to stock up on new talent. In recent weeks Alabama has raised the number of players committing to Alabama to seven. The latest to announce for Bama are wide receiver Brian Bass and offensive lineman Atlas Herrion. Both are Alabamians who are currently in school out of state.

Bass is a 6-1, 180-pound wide receiver who is originally from Fayette, but who is attending Westminster Academy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, this year. The school does not have a football team, but is one of the nation's best in baseball. Bass is one of the top baseball prospects in the nation and is projected as a high draft choice next spring, but he said he will not pass up college football for the chance to play professional baseball.

Herrion, a native of Daphne who is now playing at Dodge City (Kansas) Community College has announced he intends to sign with the Crimson Tide. He was a high school teammate of current Tide defensive end Kenny King. He picked Alabama over Mississippi State, Ole Miss, Auburn, South Carolina and LSU, among others, he said.

Previously announced as committed to Bama are offensive lineman Von Ewing of Charles Henderson High School in Troy; offensive lineman Mark Sanders of Ashville; wide receiver-kick return specialist Brandon Brooks of Birmingham Shades Valley; defensive end/tight end Brandon Washington of Tuscaloosa Central; and linebacker David Peterson of Coffeyville, Kansas, Junior College, who signed with Bama two years ago.

Gerald Wallace Scare

Alabama's men's basketball team got a scare on its first day of practice. Freshman sensation Gerald Wallace sustained a neck injury, a cervical sprain, and had temporary loss of

feel. However, after a night in DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa under the care of Dr. Bryan Givhan and a day away from practice, Wallace was fine. He is now back practicing with the team.

Pre-Season Rankings

After several years of mediocrity, the Alabama men's basketball program is getting some attention from the national pollsters. Among those national polls which likes the Tide best is *The Sporting News*, which ranks Alabama 15th nationally and the favorite to win the Southeastern Conference Western Division. It ranks Rod Grizzard 18th among the nation's top 20 shooting guards, and Gerald Wallace 11th among its Top 20 small forwards. The publication likes both Alabama's front court (Erwin Dudley, Jeremy Hays, Reggie Rambo, Kenny Walker and Gerald Wallace) and its back court (Grizzard, Tarik London, Doc Martin, Terrance Meade, Demetrius Smith and Antoine Pettway) as it places both 11th among its top 20.

Basketball News ranks Alabama 21st in its Top 64 and predicts Alabama will be the SEC West winner. In the ESPN.com rankings Alabama is 22nd. A national web-site, HoopsTV.com places Alabama 17th. *Blue Ribbon Yearbook* ranks the Tide 35th in its preseason preview and *Dick Vitale's Basketball* pre-season publication puts the Tide at 38th and another national website, FansOnly.com ranks the Tide 34th in the pre-season.

Ticket Information

Tickets are on sale for the Alabama men's basketball team's 2000-2001 home season. Season tickets are \$192 for the home game package which includes 16 games. Single game tickets are \$12 adults and \$6 for students 15 years old and younger.

While most of the Tide Pride seating is sold out, a limited number of memberships in the "Passer Club" remain. Call the Tide Pride office at (205) 348-6113.

Alabama's home schedule is highlighted by Kentucky's visit on January 23, the February 17 Ohio State game and its January 27 home date with Auburn.

For tickets, call the University of Alabama Athletic Ticket Office at (205) 348-6111 or SouthTix 1-800-277-1700.

Alabama opens its 2000-01 season officially on November 20 against Troy State, though it debuts the team on November 8 with an exhibition game against an international team followed by a November 15 home date with Athletes in Action.

Two Great Causes

As part of the Beat Auburn/Beat Hunger Food Drive campaign, both the women's and men's basketball exhibition games will be letting fans in the game free when they bring a canned food item. This will be for all four exhibition games, the women's games on November 2 and 9 and the men's games on

November 8 and 15. Donations benefit the West Alabama Food Bank.

Dine With The Tide

The public gets a chance to dine with the Alabama men's basketball team when the Tuscaloosa Tip-Off Club hosts its annual pre-season meet-the-team dinner. The informal event will take place at the Ferguson Center Ballroom on Thursday, November 2 beginning at 6:30 p.m. CST. Alabama's players and coaches will be there. Fans are welcome to bring their cameras and have pictures taken with the players and coaches.

Tickets for the event, which includes dinner, are \$9 and may be purchased by contacting the Tuscaloosa Tip-Off Club's Sarah House at (205) 345-5860. She can also provide membership information.

Women Short-Handed

The women's basketball team is somewhat short-handed as practice is underway. Much of the problem is academics.

Sophomore Ferris Peters was dismissed from the team by Coach Rick Moody for violation of team academic policies. The Tide will also be without the services of seniors Taquilla Allen and Boo Barnes until mid-December due to academic situations.

Additionally, freshman Mandy Lard is working through rehab following surgery to correct a stress fracture in her lower leg.

Queen Candidate

Senior women's basketball player Joni Crenshaw was elected by a vote of Alabama athletes to represent that group in this year's Homecoming Queen elections. It marks the fifth year that the Tide athletes have nominated a candidate.

Cross Country Championships

Alabama has become cross country central late in the season. Bama was to host two men's and women's championship meets, the Southeastern Conference Championships on October 30 and the NCAA Region IX meet on November 11. Teams advance from regional meets to the NCAA Championship Meet in Ames, Iowa, on November 20.

Bama's men's team was expected to be led this year by sophomore David Kimani, who was NCAA cross country champion last year while competing for South Alabama. He transferred to Bama, but has not been able to compete because of a stress fracture. However, his workouts have been going well and he is expected to be ready for the championship meets.

In Kimani's absence Chris Mutai has flourished earning top five finishes in every race this season, including at the pre-national race where he finished fifth in a field that included most of the nation's current top 25. The senior has earned SEC Athlete of the Week honors.

Golfers Ranked

The Tide men's golf team of Coach Dick Spybey has earned a spot in the nation's top-

ranked teams this fall. Although golf is primarily a spring sport in college, teams play a limited fall schedule and rankings are compiled. Alabama won two tournaments in the fall and finished fourth in another before the first rankings were announced. Bama checked in at number 24, which was appropriate since it was just in time for the Tide to host the Jerry Pate National. The Jerry Pate National, which is played at Old Overton in Birmingham, is the nation's most prestigious fall tournament. Of the 12 entries, 11 were ranked in the nation's top 25, including number two Clemson, which won the event, and number one Georgia.

One of the leaders for the Tide this year has been Wesley Pate, the son of former Tide star Jerry Pate, who sponsors the fall tournament.

Women Playing Well

The Bama women's golf team of Coach Betty Palmer is having a solid fall season. The team has posted a pair of Top 10 finishes and will conclude competition November 6-8 at the Pine Needle Invitational in Southern Pines, North Carolina. The tournament is being played at Pine Needles Country Club, site of the 2001 U.S. Women's Open.

Junior Sarah Johnston is off to an amazing start with top five individual finishes at every event this season. Johnston is coming off a runner-up finish in the Tide's last event where she fired a course-record 66 in the opening round of the event en route to a career-low tournament total of three-under par 213.

Meet The Gymnasts

While the Alabama gymnastics team is still two months away from kicking off its season by hosting the Super-Six Challenge on Saturday, January 6, that hasn't kept the Crimson Tide's booster group, The Medalist Club from getting started. The club will host its annual Kickoff Barbecue at 3 p.m. CST Sunday, November 12, in the Scholarship Room at Bryant-Denny Stadium. Coaches and gymnasts will be on hand.

For more information about the event or joining the club, go to the organization's website www.gymtide.com

Volleyball Success

Following a come-from-behind win against Kentucky on October 22, the volleyball team of Coach Judy Green moved into first place in the Southeastern Conference Western Division with a 6-3 record. And at 17-6, Bama has the best record of any modern era (since 1989) team.

Senior Michelle Green has twice been named SEC Player of the Week as she leads the league in kills. She was on pace to set the Alabama record for kills in a season.

Monica Morales became just the fourth member of the 1,000 Kill/1,000 Dig Club at Alabama following an eight-dig performance against Ole Miss.

The Tide was supposed to move into the main arena at Coleman Coliseum for the final half of the season after work had been completed in the main arena area. However, with standing room only crowds and a 4-1 record in the Volleyball Annex at the rear of the Coliseum, the team elected to finish out the season in that facility.

Soccer Records

Senior forward Melissa McGee has broken two Alabama soccer records this year. Against Vanderbilt she turned in her record-breaking 15th assist this season. And in an early-season match against Texas she broke the all-time record for career shots with her 139th.

Baseball Roundup

Between graduation, the major league draft, and defections to other schools, the Alabama baseball team can count 16 members of last spring's roster that are no longer with the squad. That's the bad news. The good news is that team did not achieve as much as was expected. Last year Coach Jim Wells was picked third in the nation in pre-season and ended up fourth in the SEC Western Division with a 41-24 overall record and 16-14 SEC mark.

After four weeks of fall practice, Wells is showing optimism. "The fall has gone very well," Wells said. "We are better than we thought. We are much better defensively, too. We also have two guys on the mound that we feel can win in the SEC. I am very encouraged."

Wells, who begins his seventh season at Bama, said, "Our goals this fall were to play hard and become a better team and we did that. We have a large number of players who practice hard every day. I think we are similar to the first team (1995) in that regard. That makes a big difference."

Early Warning

The SEC Office announced that beginning in 2002, SEC baseball teams will play a 33-game conference schedule rather than the 30-game schedule. Each team will play the 11 other teams, rather than rotating a team from the opposite division every two years. The new schedule format calls for 18 SEC home games and 15 road games one year, followed by 15 home games and 18 road games the next year.

Softball Update

Alabama's softball team completed its fall practice work and Head Coach Pat Murphy was pleased. It is never a surprise when a ball coach suggests the key to success is pitching, and that is Murphy's greatest concern, even though Shelley Laird and Melissa Bautista return from last year's College Softball World Series team. Freshman Erin Wright is needed to step up, too, Murphy said.

He said Laird, an All-America last year, has added two new pitches to her arsenal and appears even better than last year.

Murphy was most impressed with senior All-America first baseman Ginger Jones, who accounted for all four runs for her team in Bama's final scrimmage of the fall. She blasted a three-run homer, then added a solo shot.

Senior All-America outfielder Kelly Kretschman rejoined the team after missing the first few weeks. Kretschman was in Sydney, Australia, with the gold medal-winning United States softball team. Kretschman is not enrolled in fall classes, but, like all Olympic athletes, received an NCAA waiver allowing her to practice.



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Will He Survive As Tide's Coach?

by Kirk McNair

A disappointing season raises questions

When two or more Alabama football fans gather a topic of conversation is likely to be the future of Crimson Tide Head Coach Mike DuBose. That subject also fills much of the space available on radio talk shows and internet forums. After Bama lost a few early games, the Bama faithful demonstrated once again they get no gold stars for patience. A sixth straight loss to Tennessee—four of them under DuBose's watch—has exacerbated already intense dissatisfaction.

Although not finding anything amusing in Alabama's record, DuBose admitted he gets a chuckle over the changing winds. When it was pointed out that Alabama's Monday morning quarterbacks could proclaim the Tide staff as "ignorant" one week and "enlightened" the next, he said, "Sure, I laugh at it. It's amazing to me the number of experts that there apparently are. I know one thing: I'm not one of them. I'm far from being an expert. I'm learning something new every day."

After the Tide dropped to 1-3 on the season, DuBose was asked in one of his regular Monday press briefings if he thought he had the support of The University's administration. The coach said, "I understand the question and the reason for the question, but I cannot answer the question. You need to ask the people who have that authority. That's something that's left up to the Board of Trustees, the president, and the athletics director. That's not my decision to make."

To his credit, Athletics Director Mal Moore has not been drawn into such conversation. He has stressed that his job is to give full support to the coaches and players. As with every sport, at the end of the season DuBose will be evaluated.

Still, even legitimate media and thoughtful partisans wonder if DuBose can survive in what he once called his dream job, but which at times must seem to be a nightmare. That perception was evident when it was revealed that following Alabama's 21-0 loss to Southern Miss that DuBose had approached Moore in the locker room with something akin to an offer of resignation. Moore took it for what it was, a heat-of-the-battle statement (and one that should have been confidential) from a man willing to do whatever he can for his alma mater.

And DuBose has proved his loyalty to The University as an outstanding player, assistant

coach, and defensive coordinator, before becoming head coach prior to the 1997 season.

DuBose has said that his faith eases his concern to some extent, that he depends on God's plan, and that such a plan may have him coaching elsewhere next year.

What has gone before has an effect on the expectations of the coaches, players and fans of Alabama football. It is also not surprising that performance below expectations leads to conversation at least, and sometimes to more drastic action.

Unquestionably, something is wrong with Alabama's football situation. The 2000 edition of the Crimson Tide returned most of its players from a team that won the Southeastern Conference championship and finished in the nation's top ten in 1999. Additionally, Alabama recruiting was once again judged to be among the nation's best. It was for those reasons that Bama was generally picked to challenge Nebraska and Florida State for the national championship. DuBose considered another advantage to be that he had his coaching staff back intact.

A week into the season the hopes were badly damaged. Three weeks into the season all national goals were eliminated. Before Alabama had played a game in Bryant-Denny Stadium the Tide was facing an uphill battle to have a winning record.

Part of the problem was the loss of good players. Last year when things went bad in a game, Alabama could turn to Shaun Alexander; give him the ball and have him run behind Chris Samuels, who would give Alexander some running room. Although Bama has some tailbacks this season, the Tide has not replaced Samuels.

But as former Alabama President Dr. George Denny pointed out to former Alabama Coach Frank Thomas about 65 years ago, when Thomas was complaining about having lost his quarterback to graduation: "When you were recruiting the past four years, didn't you think you'd need a quarterback this year?" Part of the coaches' responsibility is to have players.

Coach Paul Bryant frequently referred to luck in a college football season, specifically injury luck and schedule luck. Injury luck is obvious. Injuries to the wrong player or players can be devastating. Alabama has certainly been unlucky on that score. Three front-line players—defensive end Kindal Moorehead, quarterback Tyler Watts, and tight end Terry Jones—have been among those lost for the season with injuries.

The injury to Jones compounded Alabama's problems because of the failure to replace Samuels with an offensive tackle. Bama had moved to solve the problem by using the only proven back-up tight end, Shawn Draper, at left tackle. When Jones went down it ultimately weakened four posi-

tions on the Alabama offense because of not having developed a left tackle. Draper moved to tight end. Not only was he already the number two tight end, which meant that position was weakened, he was also the number one left tackle, which meant when Dante Ellington moved to left tackle that spot was weakened. And the right tackle spot Ellington vacated was weakened. Bama then moved right guard Will Cuthbert to right tackle, and redshirt freshman Dennis Alexander was elevated to right guard, the fourth position to have less than the best player in the lineup.

It was not the first time this coaching staff had weakened more than one position because of injury. When Samuels missed the Orange Bowl game last year, Ellington, a solid right tackle, moved from right to left tackle and Lannis Baxley was elevated to number one right tackle. Obviously, if Alabama had developed a back-up left tackle, only one spot would have been weakened.

DuBose has had an explanation for failing to develop depth in the offensive line. He said that he would not risk getting a quarterback hurt by using linemen who were not ready to play. And it is partly the responsibility of the players to prove in practice they are worthy of game action. Unfortunately, a game is different than practice and it's difficult for players to get completely prepared without game experience.

Schedule luck has been a mixed bag. DuBose did not complain about having to open the season against a UCLA team that was able to beat Alabama and Michigan before settling back to average. However, DuBose did note that the Tide played four games—two on the road and two in Birmingham—before getting to its home field.

There were post-game questions as to whether Bama should open with a name opponent like UCLA. One staffer said it was asking too much of the Tide to get the team ready for that kind of opening game. The retort is that UCLA was able to get ready for Alabama.

That loss to UCLA may have been magnified because of Alabama's past success in the Rose Bowl, where the game was played. And an estimated 25,000 fans followed the Tide to Pasadena. None of them came home pleased.

Otherwise, Alabama played a Southern Miss team that is much better than the average Golden Eagles squad, could not defeat an Arkansas team that appears to be very weak, and had the good luck that Bama's top preseason competition in the SEC Western Division, Ole Miss, is not very good, particularly when star tailback Deuce McAllister is out with an injury.

Bryant also said that given the choice between having good coaches—meaning assistant coaches—or good players, he'd rather have good players. It's possible that Alabama recruiting success in recent years has been exaggerated or miscalculated, but in that



Athletics Director Mal Moore will evaluate Mike DuBose at the conclusion of the 2000 football season. Many believe DuBose is on shaky ground because of Alabama's relatively disappointing season, but Moore will be the one to decide. Barry Fikes Photo

time Alabama has done what every school wants to do: attract players being recruited by the nation's top programs. The claim can be made that a recruiting class can't be judged for several years, but other teams with top five recruiting classes over the past few years are now ranked in the top five in the national polls.

Coaches may suggest that their players are not as good as fans believe, but that's frequently an excuse for failure or a demonstration that coaching, not talent, is the reason for success. One tipoff as to the validity of such claims is whether those same coaches consider those same players irreplaceable after the completion of their eligibility.

After his first year as head coach in 1997, a year in which Alabama went 4-7, only Bama's second losing season since 1957, DuBose fired half his staff. That is not a unique solution in athletics. A problem for DuBose may be that he's done it once. A repeat of that ploy could be seen as DuBose merely rounding up a second herd of scapegoats.

While the explanations of a team's success, or lack of success, can center on schedule luck or injury luck or players or assistant coaches or even officiating, eventually the buck stops at the head coach.

The late sports editor of the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, Tom Siler, once wrote that it was time for Bryant to quit, that the game had passed him by. And a large percentage of Alabama fans probably agreed with Siler. That was in mid-1970 when Alabama was headed for its second consecutive six-win, five-loss season. Bryant didn't quit. And he would go on to win some 120 more games, nine more Southeastern Conference championships, and three more national championships before retiring at the end of the 1982 season as the winningest coach in college football history.

While that should give one reason to pause when considering a coaching change, it should also be pointed out that prior to that 1970 season, Bryant had won three national championships and almost 200 games as a head coach. His credentials were established.

When a football team goes bad, it doesn't get rid of all its players and get all new players. If a school is willing to give a coach enough time, then the effects of graduation and recruiting eventually change the team. But since that is an evolutionary process, sometimes the decision is made to change the coach before the evolution. And that happens at every level of athletics. Change coach to another name—CEO, department manager, foreman—, and it happens in every other facet of life, too.

Can DuBose turn things around? Not to the extent of pre-season expectations. So what is good enough? A winning record? Beating Auburn? Going to some bowl game? Winning the SEC or the Western Division championship? And does last year help or hurt him?

DuBose was in just as dire straits last year. In fact, facing questions of character and prior to his startling religious transformation, a case can be made that he was in worse shape last year. Moreover, while Alabama had defeated Florida, the Tide also had its second loss at the hands of Louisiana Tech. But DuBose fixed it in 1999. In fact, he was SEC Coach of the Year and a finalist for the Bryant Award as national coach of the year.

This year Alabama's relatively poor record is a national surprise. Alabama was one of the surprise teams of the nation in 1999, too. Last year the surprise was that Bama did much better than the experts thought possible, including a crushing defeat of Florida in the SEC Championship Game.

And therein may lie some of Alabama's problems this season. In some respects, it can be argued that Alabama's 1992 national championship—as good as it was coming in Alabama's centennial year of football and coming as it did against a Miami team that was easy to dislike—did Alabama football

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harm. That's because it convinced Gene Stallings that a team did not have to have a modern offense to win, and he had the trophy to prove it. And so Alabama's offense continued to languish.

DuBose's Trojan Horse may be last year's SEC championship. Fans expected more, not less, this year.

While DuBose can't call Shaun Alexander's number this season, he said, "We're not coaching any different today than we did at this time last year. We're not going to coach any different tomorrow than we did last year. We're going to go out and do our job. We're going to continue to do the things that we are doing."

And that brings to mind a favorite Stallings story. Stallings said after he was fired as coach at Texas A&M that he was with one of his friends who was a member of the school's board of trustees. "He asked me if I had it to do over what I'd do different," Stallings said. "I told him I wouldn't change a thing. And he said, 'Well, then, we'd fire you again.'"

If it is determined that Alabama must make its fifth change in head coaches in the past 18 years, there are other questions to consider:

Who will make the decision? On paper, that would be the job of the director of athletics, Mal Moore. But will the president and the members of the board of trustees leave this important decision to Moore? Moore probably has support on the board to exercise his power.

It could be that the most difficult action would not be hiring a new coach. Moore likes DuBose and wants him to succeed. It would not be easy for Moore to fire DuBose.

Alabama could get a bit of a national black-eye for another change in football coaches, but Moore cannot worry about perception. He must deal with reality.

Would Moore look for a coach with Alabama ties? That probably would not be the deciding factor. For one thing, those who want an Alabama man, and specifically a Bryant man, in charge of Bama football have that man in Moore. For another, there are very few qualified candidates with ties to Bryant.

While there are very good reasons for the very best coaches to want a chance to be the head coach at Alabama, there are also reasons to not want to coach in the shadow of Alabama's tradition. A coach knows that he will have the resources to win a national championship for Bama and a national reputation for himself at Alabama. But Alabama followers have a reputation, deserved or not, for unreasonable impatience, which is considered part of the reason for the instability and unusual rate of turnover in the office. Suppose Moore determines it's time for a change. What will be involved in finding a successor?

As in so many areas, coaching salaries are out of control. At his zenith, Bryant made about \$125,000 from The University. He refused to make more money than a dean. There's a story that Dr. David Mathews, who was president of The University, told Bryant he was going to give him a raise. Bryant said

he didn't need it. Dr. Mathews said, "Maybe you don't, but I do. And I'm not going to get a raise without giving you one."

Alabama will not be able to get another bargain-basement priced coach. In addition to the roughly million dollar salary a new coach will command, the salaries of assistant coaches will be higher. And to get a top coach, there will almost certainly be a hefty buyout. And a very long contract may be necessary.

Alabama's athletics department has always been self-sufficient, not taking any state taxpayer money or any money from The University's general fund. Indeed, Alabama's athletics department has a long tradition of giving money to The University's general fund.

Under former Athletics Director Bob Bockrath, the expenses of the athletics department sky-rocketed. As a result, the department has undergone strategic cost-cutting and is embarking on a huge fund-raising project, the first it has ever had. The goal is to raise \$40 million, and that has nothing to do with the possible great expense of a football coaching change. The \$40 million is primarily for capital improvements.

That campaign may give the impression Alabama can't afford to hire a new football coach. The last time information was available, Alabama's athletics budget was at about \$35 million a year, among the top schools in the nation and surpassed only by Florida, Tennessee and Kentucky in the SEC. The sport that pays the bills for that athletics department budget is football, so it is critical that the football program be successful. That, of course, is the responsibility of the head football coach. Therefore, if a coaching change is needed, the money certainly will be there.

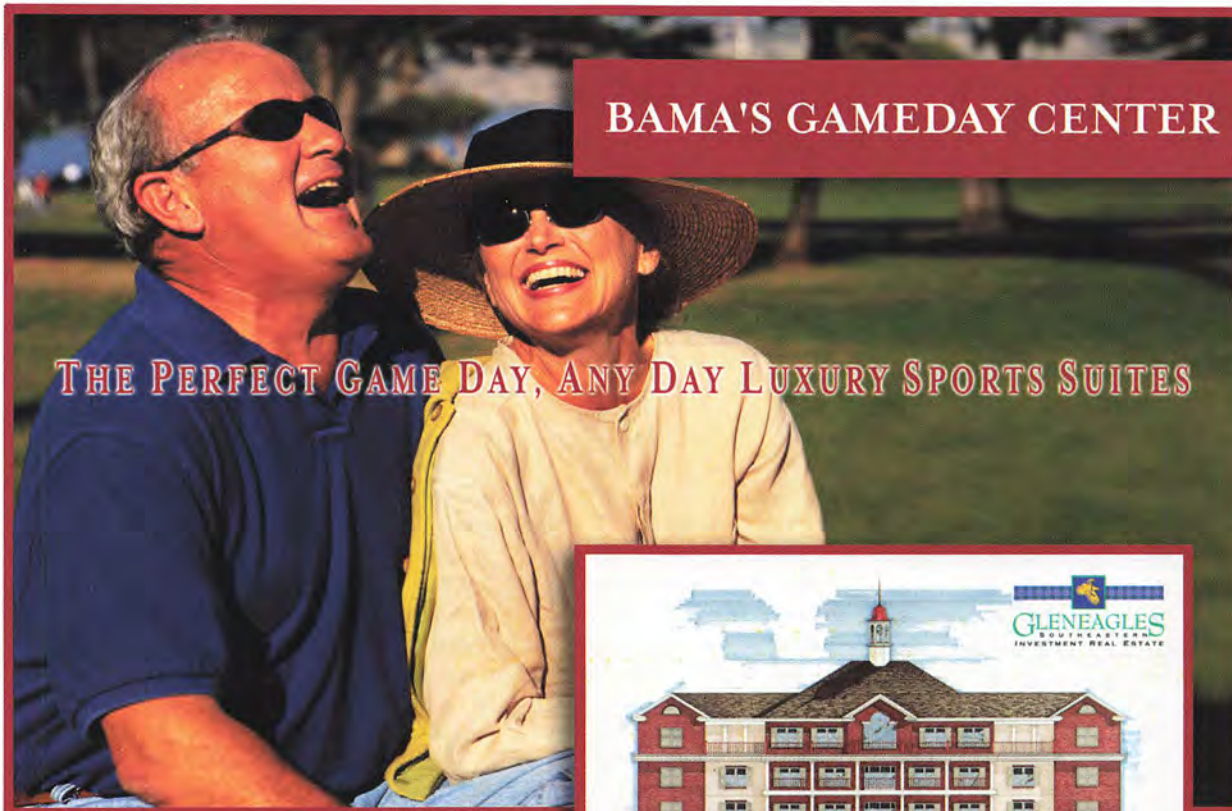
The fund-raising campaign was ill-timed for DuBose's well-being. It is certain that athletics department representatives calling on potential donors are being told of their displeasure. Moore may believe that making a change in the football coach is necessary for the financial well-being of the department.

The guessing game has already begun even as DuBose and his staff and players fight for a winning season. Who would be selected as Alabama's next head coach if a change is made? The primary criterion would probably be that he is currently a successful college head coach.

In that guessing, the top names are Tommy Bowden of Clemson, Frank Beamer of Virginia Tech, Bob Stoops of Oklahoma, Butch Davis of Miami, and Dennis Franchione of TCU.

Bowden has a bit of history with Alabama as an assistant coach under Bill Curry in the late 1980s. And there are a few possibilities with Alabama backgrounds, including Jackie Sherrill at Mississippi State, David Cutcliffe at Ole Miss, and Mike Riley of the San Diego Chargers of the National Football League.

And, of course, DuBose could have a second straight season in which he survives by the barest. But that scenario is looking more unlikely.



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He No Longer Carries The Ball

by Kirk McNair

His plan to be a running back made a detour to defense and outside linebacker

Former Alabama Football Coach Gene Stallings frequently reminded his players, "The fun is in the winning." That's because much of football is not fun. Practice is drudgery. Players leave the practice field tired and sore, sometimes injured.

Adam Cox admits that he didn't play football because he loved it. What he loved was running with the football, and that is all he had ever done on a football field before coming to Bama. He was a running back in youth ball and then at Walker High School in Jasper, where he ran well enough to earn all-state honors three years.

Although running the football for Alabama had not been a life-long dream, when the opportunity came to sign with the Crimson Tide, Cox came aboard with the 1997 freshman class.

While Cox started his career as a halfback, he is now working on the defensive side of the football. The 6-1, 225-pound fourth-year junior is Alabama's top back-up at both left and right linebacker positions. And he's also seen duty as a back-up middle linebacker for Bama this year, and still sees a smattering of playing time on special teams.

Cox is happy to be at Alabama, but he doesn't mind saying that he misses playing on offense. And when does he miss it? "Every day," he said.

"The only reason I started playing football was to run the ball," Cox said. "But there was nothing I could do. I saw what was going on here. And that meant I had a couple of options. I didn't want to do anything rash; I enjoy being at Alabama. But I saw it wasn't going to happen at running back."

Cox approached Head Coach Mike DuBose about his situation. "He told me he didn't think I was at the right position," Cox said. "He wanted to try me at linebacker. I'd rather play there than stand on the sidelines, so I moved to linebacker."

He admitted that he sometimes thinks that Alabama's coaches "will decide they need me at tailback, but in truth I know it's never going to happen. But that doesn't mean it wasn't hard to leave running back. When I

was in the tenth grade I almost gave up football because I didn't enjoy it. And when I had to move to defense, where I'd never played before, it was a difficult thing."

There's a bit of irony in that Cox played at Walker High School with current Tide teammate Griff Redmill. The two are roommates. And while Cox was shifted from offense to defense, Redmill made the opposite trip. He was a defensive end in high school who now plays offensive guard. "He loves it," Cox said.

Cox wasn't just an average running back in high school. As a sophomore he gained 1,312 yards and scored 11 touchdowns. The next year he rushed for 1,704 yards and 19 touchdowns. Then as a senior he led his team to an 8-2 record as he ran for 1,364 yards and 17 touchdowns, averaging 8.8 yards per carry. He received 6A all-state honors all three years. As a senior he was named a prep All-America.

As a true freshman he was redshirted while working at tailback with the scout team. Although technically still an offensive back (some days a tailback, some days a full-back) in 1998, he saw no playing time on offense. However, he did play in every game, a member of punt return and coverage and kickoff return and coverage special teams.

In the spring of 1999, Cox was switched to strongside linebacker. [Alabama has since changed from a strongside/weakside linebacker alignment to left and right linebacker spots.]

Last season he was the number one back-up at outside linebacker in Bama's first two games, then injured his shoulder. He missed the next six games before getting back for the final five. All of his playing time as a sophomore was at outside linebacker, backing up both Saleem Rasheed on the left side and Darius Gilbert or Miguel Merritt on the right side. Cox said his shoulder still gives him problems and there's nothing that can be done surgically to fix it.

Defensive Coordinator Ellis Johnson said, "In the transition from offense to defense, he had some ups-and-downs. But every time

he got in the game, he got a little better. And now he's giving us some good depth for the stretch run. He's making great strides."

Late last season, Rasheed was forced to move to middle linebacker following an injury to Marvin Constant. In August, Constant's situation, along with a position move for Aries Monroe, put Cox in the middle for a few weeks. Monroe, a junior college transfer who arrived last winter, worked at middle linebacker all spring. However, in August, it was determined Monroe was more suited to defensive end. Thus Cox was shifted to a back-up spot behind Victor Ellis at middle linebacker. When Constant returned to action early this season, Cox was back to outside linebacker, where he backs up Rasheed and Gilbert.

Cox may not be thrilled to be on defense, but he is happier at outside linebacker than middle linebacker. "Middle is easier to learn," he said, "but with my body it's hard to play. You need to be big and bulky like Marvin to play there."

One reason Cox can be effective at outside linebacker is his speed. Johnson, who coaches the outside linebackers, said "Adam has great speed for a linebacker."

Cox thinks he has good speed for anywhere. "I run a 4.5 40-yard dash," he said. "I know there are all sorts of players who are supposed to run 4.3 and 4.4, but you talk to a speed coach. A guy who is running 4.3 in the 40 has world class track speed. That is not a realistic speed for a tailback. I'm plenty fast enough to play tailback. In fact, I can outrun all of our tailbacks."

His speed has given him a special place in certain Alabama schemes. "We had to play him inside for a few games because of the injury to Marvin, but his speed marks him as an outside linebacker," Johnson said. "He's had enough experience now that he's ahead of the young guys (Brooks Daniels and Cornelius Wortham), and his speed makes him a force in our blitz package."

Cox is a regular in Bama's "nickel" package of three down linemen, three linebackers and five defensive backs. From that set,



Adam Cox is one of Alabama's fastest football players and his speed gives him a chance to be a very good outside linebacker. Although he came to Bama as a tailback, he has made the switch to defense. Barry Fikes Photo

he is a likely fourth pass rush man. "I like to blitz," he said. "I'm not real good at it because we can't practice it against our best offense. We're not going to hit our quarterback. When I first got the chance to blitz in a game, I was surprised by the ability of the quarterback to spin away. You can't get a feel for it until you've done it in a game."

Johnson also believes that Cox is becoming more comfortable as a linebacker. "He's in a good frame of mind and is gaining confidence," the coach said. "We're expecting him to play a lot more as the season progresses."

Cox said, "Coach Johnson has been real patient with me. He tells it like it is and shows no favoritism. He does his job and does it fairly."

Cox said he is beginning to have a satisfaction with defense. "I like run situations and I like being the one trying to hit the running back. From that standpoint, it's better on defense. The tailback...everyone's trying to hit him."

He doesn't think he has any special advantage on defense because of having played offense in the past. "The only one I can think of is that when we practice against our offense, I know the audibles," he said. That may have helped him in last spring's A-Day Game, when he turned in seven tackles.

However, Cox said, perhaps as a hint, "I think now if I went back to offense, my time on defense would help me. But that's because I didn't know anything about defense before."

Cox said, "At the beginning of this season I realized that I was beginning to understand the defense. Not just learning what to do, but actually understanding why. Now I know what everyone on defense is doing and why. I know all the coverages, all the fronts, and all the stunts. When you know that, you know what everyone will be doing on every play and how the plays will be made. It's a big advantage to understand it as opposed to just knowing your assignment."

Cox is aware that he has been singled out in television coverage of Alabama football. "Everyone saw me in the Orange Bowl," he

said. "That game was a real disappointment, and in the overtime you could really see me. But we never should have been in that position."

In the 35-34 overtime loss to Michigan, the Michigan tight end caught a touchdown pass in overtime. Cox was trailing behind the receiver. "He was my man," Cox said. However, the safety coverage was also blamed for that score, coaches said.

In any event, that's not the highlight Cox wants to be remembered for. "I haven't had one," he said. "I hope to have a highlight game to remember."

Cox, who said as something of a protest he was the lone Auburn fan in his family growing up, is one of the few Alabama football players who isn't banking on an NFL career. "It would be nice, but I've got another plan," he said. He intends to attend dental school and then work with his father, Jim. Jim Cox had a brief career as a walk-on football player at Bama, but ended up taking a scholarship offer at Jacksonville State, then attending UAB and becoming a dentist.

"Big D" Fills A Big Hole In Line

by J. E. Lisby

Natural attributes and very hard work have redshirt freshman starting on offensive line

Before the current season began almost all the stories written about the Alabama offensive line focused on its three returning senior starters—Will Cuthbert, Paul Hogan and Griff Redmill—or Dante Ellington, the sophomore phenomenon at left tackle. But it takes five players to make up a starting unit. And after experimenting with various combinations, Tide Offensive Line Coach Neil Callaway has apparently settled on the last piece of the puzzle.

From the moment Dennis Alexander stepped on campus, practice observers tabbed him a starter-in-waiting. His teammates call him "Big D." Alexander stands 6-5 and weighs in the 315-pound range, plenty big, but hardly extraordinary on a football team. What sets him apart is his shoulder-to-shoulder span. "I'm a pretty big guy," Alexander said. "And I guess folks would say I'm physical. I'm a guy who really enjoys what I'm doing, and I want to play football. I suppose you could say my strength is my strength."

Based on looks, Alexander is an impressive specimen. But to hear him tell it, his true-freshman debut during August three-a-days was hardly intimidating. "When I first got here I looked around and saw guys that were the same size as I was; and faster," Alexander said. "I was like 'Man, how am I going to come in here and play?' That was a big difference for me. I had never played against anyone who was bigger and faster than me, so it was a little bit of a shock. You can't tell on TV how big these guys are. But when you line up against them to actually play, it's a big difference. During some early drills I almost fell down. Man, I couldn't believe they were moving that fast. I had never seen anything like it in my life. I was just wondering if I was ever going to get on the field while I'm here."

Adjusting to the size and speed of big-time college football is a problem for every freshman athlete, but lineman like Alexander, ac-

customized to dominating lesser opponents on size alone, face a special challenge. "When I was in high school I probably weighed about 335 or 340," Alexander said. "And the average defensive lineman in high school isn't that big. At the most he might weigh about 245 or 250. So there were times when I could kind of cruise along in high school, because I was so much bigger."

Last season Alabama was pretty much set along the offensive line. Dante Ellington did start as a true freshman, but beyond that the two-deep roster was solid, which afforded Alexander the opportunity to sit out the year and improve. "I do think the redshirt year was good for me," Alexander said. "It helped me get adjusted to the speed of the game, and it also helped me get situated in the classroom. I was able to get the playbook down, so I didn't have to be thinking about it when I first went out there. Working that year with Coach Jones (Terry Jones, Alabama's strength and conditioning coach) really helped me, too. He's the one who told me to come in an extra two days each week, and he really worked me hard. I could tell by that spring that I had really benefited from being in the weight room."

Spring practice went very well for Alexander. He showed promise at both guard and tackle, prompting Callaway to mention him as a likely member of Bama's five best for 2000. Of course, the demanding coach also saw areas in need of improvement. "Dennis needs to get a little stronger in his legs and develop more quickness and speed," Callaway said. "But he's a good person. He works hard and picks up things well. Plus, he's good at the point of attack. But overall, his leg strength and quickness are areas where he needs to improve."

Alexander put his redshirt year and last summer to good use, working hard in the weight room to get stronger and improve his agility. Plus, for the first time in his young athletic career, the huge lineman focused on

nutrition to shed some excess baggage. "I've dropped a lot of weight since I first arrived," Alexander said. "About 20 pounds, and that's been real helpful. Plus, I came in bench pressing about 315, and I upped that to about 375, so I've been doing pretty good. But losing weight for an offensive lineman really helps your agility. It lets you move your feet faster, and dropping those pounds really helped me out. My feet weren't that fast when I first got here, but I've made improvements since then. I'm still trying to drop a little bit more weight, though, so I can get even faster."

The goal is simple. Over the next few years Alexander wants to build himself into an almost-perfect lineman. "I'd say the ideal size would be about 6-4 to 6-5 and around 305 pounds," Alexander said. "And strength is also important. You've got to have strong legs and hips and your upper body as well. Size alone does help out, but too much weight really isn't going to benefit a lineman. It's hard to move your feet when you're heavy, so a lot of weight isn't really good."

Agility is crucial to any athlete's success, and Alexander knows he has to work on that part of his game. Interestingly, an examination of the numbers reveals Alexander doesn't have far to go. "If I lost 20 pounds, I believe I can lose 10 more," Alexander said. "But I also want to work on my feet after the season to get a lot more agile. I've seen a lot of improvement from last year, but I'm still not where I want to be. I want to work on my agility, and I want to lose about 10 more pounds." Ten pounds may not seem like much off a 300-pound man, but Alexander said it's not easy for him. "In fact," he said, "it's real hard. But I believe I can do it."

Unlike the previous year, Alexander approached the 2000 season with confidence, intent on winning a starting job. With a year's worth of hard-won experience under his belt, the redshirt freshman was ready for the challenge he knew



Dennis Alexander, a redshirt freshman, has proved to be the missing piece of the offensive line puzzle. Although Bama lost just one starter from last year's offensive line, it took some juggling to fill the hole. Chris Samuels, a left tackle, graduated. He has been replaced by Alexander, a right guard. Along the way Dante Ellington had to move from right tackle to left tackle, and Will Cuthbert stepped over from right guard to right tackle. Barry Fikes Photo

would come from his position coach. "Coach Callaway is actually a great guy," Alexander said. "He's tough as nails, now, and you don't want to get on his bad side. But he's a great guy. He gets on you when you do things bad, but he'll praise you when you do things well. He's a great coach."

Callaway didn't get a reputation as one of the best offensive line coaches in the country by not being demanding. But the coach is also quick to praise his athletes when he can. "Dennis is a heady guy," Callaway said. "He plays smart, and his upper-body strength is good. He's started for us several games this year. Right now we're trying to settle on our long-term guy, but he'll be in the playing rotation throughout this year."

Those attributes had earned Alexander the starting nod back in August (setting off a string of happy phone calls back home to his family in Memphis). But then cruel fortune intervened in the form of a strained

medial collateral ligament in his knee. That forced 'Big D' to put his starting plans on hold. "It really was frustrating," Alexander said. "I had just gotten the starting position, and I think I had it only for a day or two at the most. (The knee) was real painful at the time. For that first week or so, it was hard to even walk on without crutches. Of course the weight of a guy my size didn't help it either. I was real upset about it. I didn't know when I got back if I could come back and play or if somebody had taken my position or what. I wanted to get out there so badly I couldn't stand it."

Alexander's strained knee ligament forced him to stand and watch as his teammates stumbled out of the gate in a disappointing loss to UCLA. But after rehabilitating successfully he once again finds himself in a starting role at right guard. "That first game I was real nervous when I first ran out there," Alexander said. "It was really an im-

pressive atmosphere to play in, and it really was fun, but I was definitely nervous. Starting for the first time, and playing in front of 85,000 people on a weekly basis is a lot of pressure. I talk to my teammates. Will (Cuthbert) kind of keeps my head in the game and Paul (Hogan) and Griff (Redmill) will correct me and get on me. But they also tell me to keep my head up and keep going."

That last part is good advice for anyone facing adversity, and Alexander thinks it can work for the current Tide squad, facing an uphill battle to rebound from a poor start and trying to repeat as conference champions. "I don't think we were over-rated, and I don't think we were over-confident either," Alexander said. "It was just that we weren't playing as a team. Now it's going to take an effort from every athlete. Everyone has to come together and play as one. Once we do that, we're going to start clicking. And I think we'll really have some fun."

The Walk-Ons:

Vital Part Of Bama Success

by J.E. Lisby

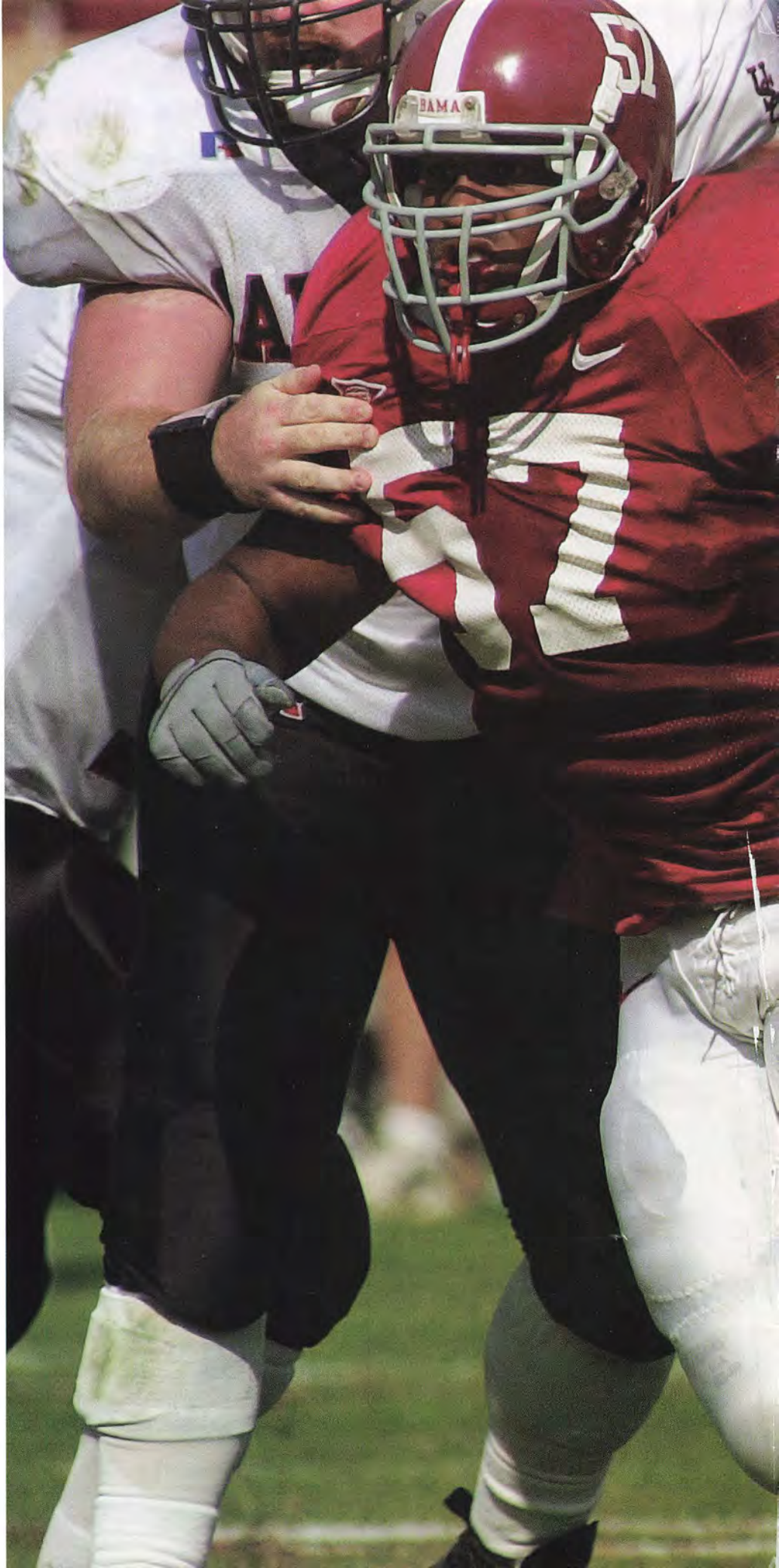
Non-scholarshipped players
drawn by Tide tradition

It's a simple precept. Any endeavor that would have long-term success must be built on a solid foundation. And for Alabama football, a major part of that bedrock comes from its walk-on program.

A visit to Thomas-Drew Field during any Tide football practice offers demonstration. In one corner will be defensive linemen working on pass-rush techniques. On the other side receivers are running pass routes. Next to them on the middle field quarterbacks rehearse the center snap. Beyond them running backs are practicing blitz pickup. Across the way the crashing of shoulder pads announces offensive linemen working on drive blocks. To the side linebackers work on tackling fundamentals. And around the corner of the Indoor Practice Facility kickers warm up their legs.

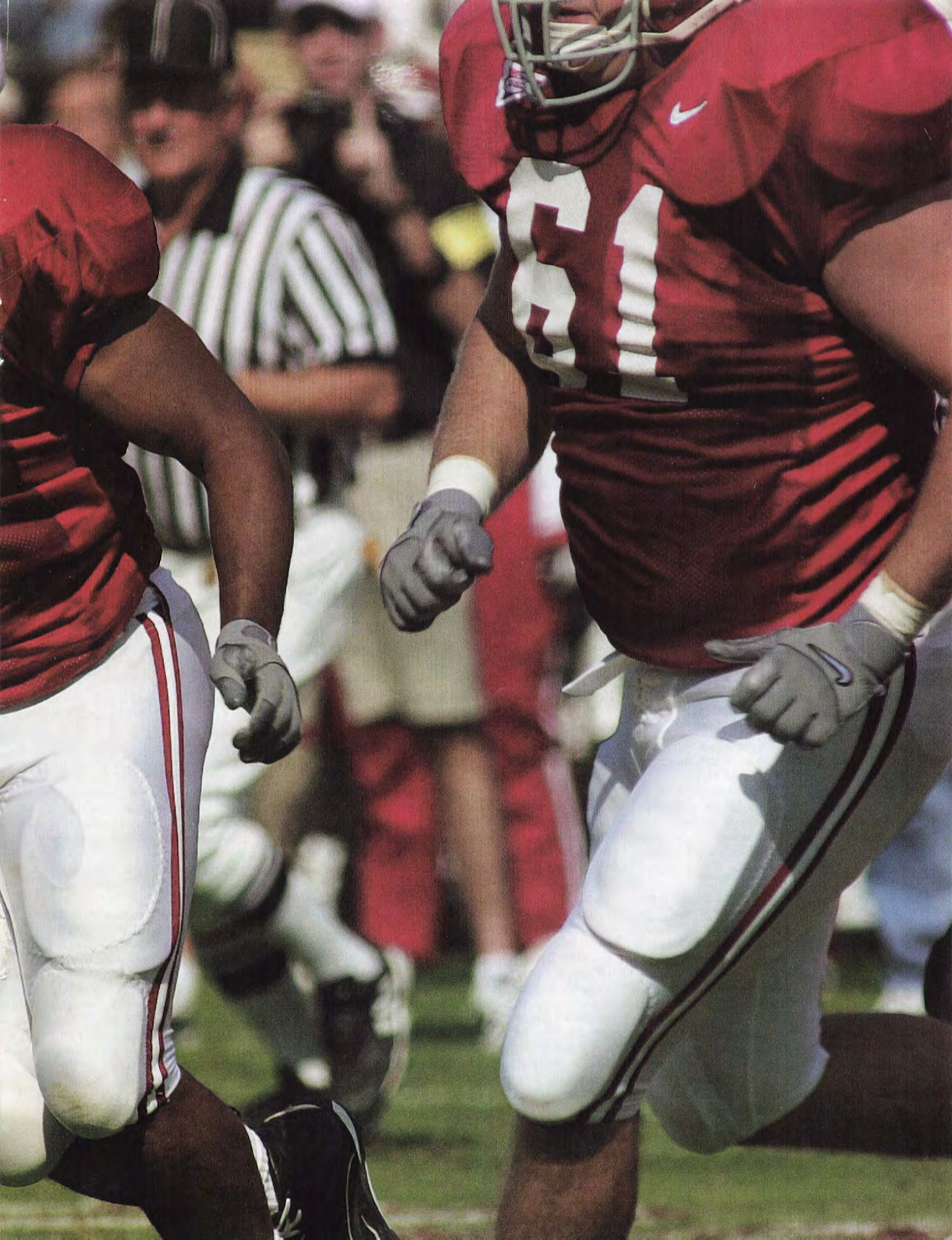
Like a well-orchestrated seven-ring circus, independently every group is working hard to improve. And on every field the presence of quality walk-ons to work with and against the starters ensures that the practice time will be productive. "An outstanding walk-on program allows you to get more good players on your squad," said Dabo Swinney, Alabama's wide receivers coach who also coordinates the walk-on program. "And it also allows you to have quality practice. We want to practice against the looks we're likely to see in each game. For example, when we're getting ready to play Florida, we want our offense to see their defense, their schemes and what they do. Likewise, the first-team defense is going against the Florida offensive schemes. They're running their plays and giving them the look that they'll see in the ballgame."

Every squad spends game week working against its next opponent's schemes. But the popularity and success of Alabama's walk-on



David Daniel (57) walked on at Alabama after junior college success and midway through the season found himself in the starting line-up at defensive tackle.

Barry Fikes Photo





Michael James started his college football career at West Alabama, but elected to transfer to Alabama without a scholarship. He is now playing at wide receiver and as a member of Crimson Tide special teams. Barry Fikes Photo

program gives it a distinct advantage over other college teams. "We practice differently than a lot of schools," Tide Head Coach Mike DuBose said. "A lot of people have to practice their offense against their defense and split it up. But because of our walk-ons we have enough to be able to work our first and second offense against our third defense and vice versa. Without the walk-ons, we couldn't do that."

Players who choose to try out for the team simply for the love of the game have always been a part of college sports, and that has been especially true at Alabama. Locker room space means that only 170 can work with the team, yet each year Swinney hears from over 300 young men asking to join the Tide as walk-ons. Recent NCAA regulations have greatly increased the importance of attracting quality athletes willing to play for free. With every school being limited to only 25 new scholarships each year and no more than 85 overall, walk-on players are often counted on for depth; and some are able to play their way onto the field. "The walk-on program here at The University of Alabama has got a rich tradition of its own," Swinney said. "The precedent has been set, the path has been paved for them. It's not unheard of

for guys to come in here and make it. There's the opportunity for them to come in and play."

In that regard it's fitting that along with his on-the-field coaching duties Swinney finds himself in charge of the walk-on program. Not too long ago, a younger, smaller version of the current Tide coach arrived in Tuscaloosa determined to join the team he loved. But Swinney's early years at The Capstone were far from easy, as he was forced to prove his worth. An off-season weight-training program for 48 walk-on candidates eliminated all but Swinney and a couple more. Then after working doggedly to catch the eye of his position coach, Swinney had to start all over again when the departure of then Head Coach Bill Curry meant a complete changeover in the coaching staff. But he endured, and when several key injuries hit the Tide during the '90 season, Swinney seized his chance and wound up earning a starting job along with a precious scholarship his last season.

Swinney's personal experience as an athlete makes him an ideal choice to work with the current walk-on hopefuls. But he can also point to other Tide players who

have followed the same path. Besides kickers (it's common for punters, placekickers and long snappers to be awarded a scholarship only after earning the job), numerous Alabama athletes have earned significant playing time in the '90s after starting their careers as a walk-on. Along with Swinney, the list includes Roman Colburn, Mickey Conn, Jeff Foshee, Chad Goss, Chad Key, Brenon Meadows, Darryl Pickett and Lorenzo Ward. Currently Arvin Richard and Marcus Spencer both see significant action for the Tide since starting their careers as walk-ons.

After steadily working his way up the depth chart, Spencer now starts for Alabama and is a devastating tackler from his strong safety position. But in his first year on campus the man they call 'Night Train' had anything but a clear track. "It was very tough," Spencer said. "When I first got here, I was really just a number, Number 109. I was just practice material. I got out here and everything I did was to try to prove myself. I never could take a play off. If you ever think about trying to get on the field as a walk on, you've got to be full tilt."

Recent Alabama recruiting has been outstanding. And given the fact that the Tide

has signed three nationally ranked recruiting classes in a row, it may come as a surprise that two junior walk-ons are making significant contributions this season. Michael James, a junior wide receiver, was starting for West Alabama when he decided to give up his scholarship and transfer to Alabama. And David Daniel, a former junior college All-America at defensive tackle, turned down offers from Marshal and Louisiana Tech (among other schools) to play for the Tide.

Though James grew up as an army brat on military bases across the country, both he and Daniel claim Tuscaloosa as home. And their love for Alabama played a major role in their choice of schools. "No matter where we were stationed, we always watched Alabama games," James said. "My Dad wouldn't let us watch anything else. I came for the tradition, and I wanted to play in front of large crowds. When I was at West Alabama, we might play in front of two or three thousand. Plus, I want to prepare myself to play on the next level, and I think Alabama is the best place to get me there."

James has played in every game, including time on special teams and at wide receiver. Swinney likes his speed and expects him to play a more significant role in Alabama's rotation at wide receiver. For his part, Daniel started the season as part of the rotation at defensive tackle, and worked his way up to a starting job before being injured in an automobile accident.

"Playing up here with the bigger boys, I'm a little underweight, undersized, but still the coaches saw I had quickness," Daniel said. "I certainly wasn't starting at first. I came in third string. But I worked my way up every day, and Coach (Lance) Thompson gave me the opportunity to get some playing time. I practiced hard and did every drill full out. I did everything the coaches told me. I tried to take advantage of the opportunity."

At close to 6-1 and 275 pounds, Daniel isn't perfectly sized for his position. But after problems due to qualifying (Mac Tyler and Anthony Bryant), conditioning (Albert Means) and injury (Kindal Moorehead, Kenny King and Kelvis White), the Tide defensive coaches see him as a godsend. "I don't know where we'd be without him this year," said Thompson. "We'd be in a bind, especially with the injuries we've had to Kindal and Kenny King and Kelvis being nicked up again with his knee. We'd be in a bad way without David. He's been very valuable to this team."

Daniel already had two years of college-level competition under his belt before arriving at Alabama, so maturity played a part in his early success. But his coaches point to another even more important factor. "He's got unbelievable character," Thompson said. "If you get old fashioned and you go back, character wins. It wins in football, and it wins in life. Character to me is what you're going to do when nobody else is looking, what you're going to do when times are

tough. It means you'll prepare better than other people that might cut corners or take a shortcut. I think character allows some people the chance to become great players. And as a coach it's pleasant to be around a kid like that."

Both Daniel and James were what some have termed 'invited walk-ons,' athletes that while not being offered a scholarship their first year were nevertheless pursued by the coaches. "Some of our walk-ons are guys that were recruited, but we weren't able to offer them a scholarship," Swinney said. "I'll tell those guys that even though we won't be able to offer a scholarship, I'd like to invite them to walk-on. I'll send them a letter inviting them to become a part of our tradition."

The walk-on program took on added importance this year when starting quarterback Tyler Watts was lost for the season with a knee injury. Alabama has only one other quarterback on scholarship. And so behind Andrew Zow, Bama now has a non-scholarship player. Jonathan Richey had been playing each week, a member of the special teams holding for field goal and extra point kicks. Against Ole Miss he got his first playing time at quarterback and he moved to second on the depth chart.

The majority of athletes who make up the walk-on program are self-recruited, young men who have chosen to pursue their dreams at Alabama. Though some come because they spotted an opportunity, almost all of them are connected to the Tide through fan loyalty or family ties. In fact, every season the Bama roster is dotted with names familiar to Tide historians. This year's squad includes Jamie Hunter (dad Scott, '68-'70), Teddy Gryska (granddad Clem, '47-'48), Nathan Cox (dad Allen, '72), David Cavan (dad Pete, '75-'77), Corey Bryan (uncle Mike DuBose, '72-'74), Mark Miller (dad Noah Dean, '73 and grandfather Floyd "Kayo," '48-'49), Lance Taylor (dad James, '73-'75), Zac Holt (dad Buddy, '77-'79), Steve Harkness (brother Fred, '80) and Rafael Tyrus (cousin Siran Stacy, '89-'91). Another tie is Neil Cross, whose father played for DuBose when he was coaching high school ball in Prattville.

For all of these young men, the goal remains the same. Whether realistic or not, the dream of every walk-on player is to one day don that Crimson jersey and run onto the turf at Bryant-Denny Stadium with the Million Dollar Band playing and the fans going wild. "The first time I ran on the field and heard the crowd and listened to 'Yea, Alabama' I knew I had accomplished one of my dreams," Daniel said. "Something I always wanted to do."

And for every youngster out there who nurtures the same Crimson dream of walking on and one day playing for Alabama, Daniel has a message. "I'd tell them to come on out and give it a shot," he said. "Don't limit yourself. You know how good you are, and you can accomplish anything. You can make it."



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Tide Hopes To Have Resurgence

by Andrew Varble II

Attitude adjustment was followed by adding talent

Alabama swimming and diving is back. Well, not quite, not all the way. But the program, once a top-10 fixture on both the men and women's side, is a far sight better than it was. For those who haven't been paying rapt attention to the Crimson Tide's aquatic doings, Alabama spent the better part of the 1970s, all of the '80s and the first half of the '90s as one of the nation's elite teams. All-Americans on the squad were a given, NCAA Champions always a possibility, and the Tide's next triumph was just around the corner.

Flash forward to the latter half of the '90s. For the last three years of the 1990s, diver Brent Roberts provided the men with their only NCAA points. The women fared worse, not scoring at the NAAs at all in 1999 and only six points (good for 33rd place) in 1998.

There was no depth and little front line talent, not a good combination to sustain a team whose men and women finished 10th and ninth respectively at the 1994 NCAA Championships.

Before last season Alabama went looking for a solution to the Tide's woes. Don Wagner, formerly United States Olympic Coach Mark Schubert's top assistant at Southern California and Olympian Janet Evans' high school mentor, was hired away from his head coaching stop at Texas A&M and charged with the reclamation process.

With time short before the beginning of his first season, Wagner and his staff could do little to restock the Tide's shelves with

top-line talent so they went to work on the team's attitude.

"They had to believe in themselves again," Wagner said. "The core of athletes who were here when I arrived wanted to win, wanted to be successful. We just showed them how to believe again."

The result of the Tide's attitude adjustment was a pair of top-30 finishes at the NCAA Championships. The men took 22nd, scoring their first swimming points since 1997. Senior Mark Jollands earned four All-America honors and scored Alabama's first individual swimming points since 1995. The women finished 27th, behind the diving of freshman Lane Bassham. The women swimmers made more noise at the United States Olympic Trials this summer. Current Junior Marcy Warriner finished 19th in the 100 breaststroke, jumping 17 spots from her seeded time. Senior Emily Donohue and 2000 senior Brooke Donoho both swam at the prestigious meet.



Leading the Alabama swimmers and divers this year will be (left to right) Marcy Warriner, Oren Azrad, Lisa Andersson and James Wilcox. Bama is expected to continue its resurgence this season. Barry Fikes Photo

Wagner and company spent all of last year scouring the world for the best of the best and did their best to convince them that Alabama was the place to be. More than Alabama's fair share listened and the Tide added a bevy of new faces to go with that winning attitude, thus pushing resurgence into high gear.

"Talented, but young." That phrase describes both Tide rosters this season. The women's team is made up of nine freshmen and 10 sophomores. The upper class is composed of three juniors and a pair of seniors. The men's squad reeled in 11 freshmen, just one fewer than the rest of the classes combined. The rookies join an existing contingent of six sophomores, three juniors and three seniors.

Captains Nic Stoel and J.P. Richard will lead the men. Richard, a senior, was part of the Tide's All-America 800 freestyle relay at last year's NCAA Championships. Stoel, a sophomore, along with Charles Reeves, gave the Tide its first real breaststroke threat in over five years.

Reeves, who dropped four seconds in the 100-meter breaststroke over the course of his freshman campaign, parlayed that success into a stint at the United States Olympic trials. Stoel finished in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke at the Southeastern Conference Championships.

Also returning in the freestyle events will be Richard's fellow senior, Oren Azrad, though the Israel native was a bit late in reporting this season. Azrad competed in the 2000 Olympics as part of the Israeli national team. In addition to his Olympic trip, Azrad was the Tide's top finisher in the 100 and 200 freestyles at last year's SEC Championships, including a fifth place finish in the 200.

Rookies Brendan Ashby, Adam Hall and James Wilcox will join Azrad and junior Matt Wilsie in the sprint freestyle events. In the 200 freestyle, freshman Bruno Bonfim comes in with the fastest time of anyone on this year's squad. He, along with Richard, Azrad and Wilcox, will see action here.

From the 500 freestyle on up to the mile, freshmen Ben Worby and Scott Weaver along

with Willcox, Richard and Bonfim will all see pool time at some point during the season. Richard finished in the mile at the SEC Championships, taking fifth place. Junior John Townsend and freshman Brad Willard will provide freestyle depth this season.

There is a lot of ability among the Tide's freestyle ranks, especially as the races get longer. But for Alabama to enjoy the same success it did last season, with the likes of All-Americans Mark Jollands and Glen Walshaw making things happen, it will have to be developed.

While Stoel and Reeves will lead the Tide's breaststroke contingent, they will have company, in the form of Hall, freshman Ben Worby, and sophomores Jeb Franklin and Brent Pridgen.

Wilsie is the Tide's top returning butterfly swimmer. He will get help from freshman Jordie Proffitt in the 100 butterfly and junior Grant Jollands in the 200. Junior T.J. Wolters and sophomore Zach Winchester will see backup duty in the fly events.

In the backstroke events, Azrad has proven himself to be among the best in Tide

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history, but he may be too busy in other events to be able to lend much of a hand. Ashby could develop into another solid entry in the backstroke. Grant Jollands and Weaver can both swim a good 200 backstroke if needed. This is another event where Alabama needs someone to step up.

In the 200 individual medley, Ashby, Proffitt and Worby have all shown potential. The 400 individual medley is a jump ball among Worby, Weaver, Proffitt and Grant Jollands.

A pair of newcomers, Aaron Ashworth and Daniel Burch, will handle diving events.

Senior captain Kelly Coellner in the freestyle events and United States Olympic trials participant Marcy Warriner in the breaststroke and sprint freestyle events will head up the women's team.

The Tide's MVP as a sophomore, Coellner is looking to rebound to top form after a series of illnesses hampered her through most of her junior season. A mainstay of the Tide's freestyle lane throughout her career, she looks to go out with a splash this season.

Warriner has done nothing but improve during her Tide career, including a head turn-

ing performance at the United States Olympic trials this summer. After entering the 100 breaststroke at the trials in 36th place, Warriner moved up 17 places, to finish 19th.

Along with Warriner, freshmen Lisa Andersson, Katie Merriam and Ann Ross will all see duty in the 50 freestyle and the 200 freestyle relays. Those four, plus Coellner should see plenty of action in the 100 freestyle and the 400 freestyle relays. Moving up to the 200 freestyle, the Tide will be looking to Coellner and freshman Catalina Casaru and sophomore Renata Miatto. Junior Katy Davidson along with freshmen Raechel Pera and Heather O'Brien will fill out the freestyle lanes.

Above the 200, there is a drop off in the Tide's numbers. There are several swimmers who can swim the middle distance to distance events, Coellner chief among them, but the Tide's strength will definitely be in the 50-200 range.

Warriner will be the Tide's chief breaststroker, coming off a smashing sophomore campaign and breakout Olympic Trials. Joining her in the breaststroke events will be sophomore transfer Cami Sink. Junior Belinda Greene and sophomores Holly McCreless

and Ginny Trott will join Warriner and Sink in the breaststroke lanes.

Merriam, along with freshman Michelle King will see a lot of 100 backstroke races, while Casaru could see action in the 200. Sophomore Kelly Kerr and freshman Liz McGriffin will add depth in the backstroke lane.

Casaru could see some races in the 200 butterfly while King and sophomore Megan Lynch, a transfer from Notre Dame, will see action in the 100 fly. Sophomores Chrissy Menendez and Dawn Coy will also be counted on in the butterfly this season.

The individual medleys will be another strength for the Tide. Casaru has been world ranked in the 400 individual medley. Senior Emily Donohue along with Coellner will also post some swims in the 200 and 400 individual medleys.

Diving was slated to be in the very capable hands of Bassham, who after her NCAA triumph, went on to shine at the United States National Championships and Olympic Trials. But off-season surgery has Bassham taking a redshirt season in 2000-01. Sophomores Katherine Bortenlanger and Laine Patterson will be looked to for support off all three boards.

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Southeast Has Its Share Of Big Men

by James Edwards

Large number include
Bama among favorites

Alabama has been fortunate the last few years to sign its share of talented big men, especially along the defensive line. But with no fewer than seven seniors currently listed on its three-deep roster from linemen, tight ends and linebackers, big men will once again be a top recruiting priority for the Tide.

Four starters from offense (Paul Hogan, Shawn Draper, Will Cuthbert and Griff Redmill) will graduate, while Kenny Smith will have to be replaced on the defensive line. And both Kelvis White and Todd Whitmore have been counted on for valuable minutes beside Smith this season. Also, Terry Jones' knee injury and subsequent surgery will place a high importance on building depth at tight end.

As always, Alabama's coaches will begin their recruiting efforts in-state. But the Tide has always signed a significant number of prospects from surrounding states and this year should be no different. And with this year's crop of Alabama prospects weighted heavily toward skill players, expect the Tide to scour the Southeast in search of quality big men.

A glance at any recruiting publication will show that once again many of the best athletes from around the country are mentioning Alabama. It's certain that Tide coaches are not actively recruiting all of them. Plus, if past history is an indication, as the recruiting season moves along Alabama will become a player with athletes not currently mentioning the Tide.

With all that in mind, here is a look at some of the Big Men—linebackers, linemen (offense and defense), and tight ends—around the Southeast who have been linked to Alabama. Players are listed alphabetically by state.

Florida

Josh Alexander, defensive end, 6-3, 260, 4.9 (40-yard dash time), from St. Joseph's Academy in St. Augustine had 90 tackles, 22 sacks, 20 tackles for loss, five fumble recoveries (two touchdowns), and six blocked kicks as a junior. And this season as a senior Alexander had 40 tackles, 10 sacks and four blocked kicks in the first four games. He made all-county, all-area, all-conference, all-district and all-state. He attended camps at Duke, Clemson and Florida. Alexander was named the Defensive Line MVP at Florida camp. His grandfather, Harry Alexander,



Mike DeGory

played for Florida in the 1950s. He bench presses 385 and squats 600. He has a 3.2 GPA and scored 19 on the ACT. Alexander will be a December graduate and is considering Florida, Oklahoma, Texas A&M, Texas, Clemson, Alabama, LSU, Georgia Tech and Auburn. He already has official visits scheduled to Oklahoma and Texas A&M.

Steve Arflin, center, 6-4, 326, 5.1, from Fletcher in Neptune Beach is able to play every position on the line. He uses his leg strength as an excellent run-play drive blocker. He says his weakness is his pass blocking, and he is working very hard at improving that area his senior year. He played center as a freshman and that is where he projects in college. Arflin has played both guard and tackle the past two years. He also plays defensive tackle. He was selected third team all-state as a junior and pre-season *Florida Times Union* Super 11 as senior. He benches 360, squats 555, and power cleans 260. He has a 2.9 GPA and scored 1080 on the SAT. Arflin has camped at Florida, and they and Tennessee are his top two. LSU, Alabama and North Carolina round out his top five.

Adam Blizzard, offensive guard, 6-3, 300, 5.2, from Northeast in St. Petersburg was a second team all-county selection who played offensive guard as a junior, but moved to offensive tackle as a senior. He has shown he has the quick feet to man the position, plus he stays low and comes off hard on running plays. Blizzard benches 275 (must get stronger) and squats 390. He has a 2.83 GPA and should qualify. Tulane, Virginia, North Carolina, Louisville, UCF, Arkansas, Missouri, Florida and Alabama are all recruiting Blizzard.

Anthony Caldwell, outside linebacker, 6-2, 225, 4.56 from Escambia in Pensacola helped

lead his team to the state finals where they finished as the state's runner up. He runs a 10.8-second 100 meters and his speed really showed his junior year as he was all over the field. He had 157 tackles, six sacks, five tackles for loss, and three interceptions. Caldwell was selected third team all-state after his junior campaign. He has a 3.0 GPA and camped at Miami and Alabama. He is looking at those two schools plus FSU, Florida and North Carolina.

Marcus Clemons, tight end, 6-7, 265, 4.85, from Astronaut in Titusville is the state of Florida's number one tight end prospect and a player who could play possibly offensive tackle, defensive end or defensive tackle. His forte is tight end where he is already an upper-level blocker thanks to his footwork, technique and aggressiveness. Clemons had 12 receptions for 280 yards and three touchdowns as a junior. He has good hands and can gain yardage after the catch. He has a 32-inch vertical jump, which is impressive for a man already 6-7 in height. On defense he had 78 tackles and six sacks as a defensive end. He made second team all-state. Clemons feels like he will play either tight end or defensive end in college, but he is not opposed to offense or even defensive tackle. He has attended the Nike Camp (Miami) and the Florida passing camp. He benches 350, squats 450, and power cleans 275. He has a 2.8 GPA and made 21 on the ACT. Clemons will cast his fortunes with Alabama, Miami, FSU, Florida or Michigan State.

Shannon Davis, offensive guard, 6-3, 320, 5.1, from Godby in Tallahassee is an athletic big man who is quick and drive blocks well. He stays low and uses his enormous frame to gain an advantage. Davis graded at 80 per cent blocking efficiency his junior year. He had a good showing at the Down and Dirty camp. He bench presses 370 and squats 400. Davis has a 3.0 GPA and says he will qualify. He has his eyes on Alabama (leader), Kentucky, FSU, Clemson, Auburn and Bethune Cookman.

Mike DeGory, center, 6-6, 310, 5.3, out of Palm Bay in Melbourne, is one of the South's top three centers and a player who loves to pound it straight at the defense. He is a deluxe package who has quick feet, an aggressive mind set, calls blocking schemes, muscles people around and works everyday on the proper steps after the snap. He needs to improve his pass blocking skills, but his work ethic should take care of that shortcoming. He understands the game from a mental standpoint and has great physical ability. DeGory is a three-year starter. He was named All Cape Coast Conference, All Central Florida and third team all-state. He is originally from Langhorne, Pennsylvania and has camped at FSU. DeGory bench presses 390 and squats 495. He has a 3.76 GPA and scored 1090 on the SAT. His brother, Ron Degory played at West Virginia Wesleyan. He has his final six of Michigan State, Notre Dame, North Carolina

State, Alabama, Florida and Georgia Tech.

James Edwards, offensive tackle, 6-5, 270, 5.3, from Rickards in Tallahassee is a sleeper prospect on the offensive line. He keeps his body low, has a wide base and uses his hands well inside. He pass blocks well, is very good on down blocks and he has the ability to get downfield and make blocks. Edwards graded around 85 per cent blocking efficiency as a junior. He bench presses 315 and squats 500. He has a 2.9 GPA and has scored 19 on the ACT. He has attended camps at Bethune Cookman and Down and Dirty. He lists Alabama as his favorite followed by East Carolina, Miami, Michigan and Bethune Cookman.

Mawase Falana, defensive tackle, 6-3, 270, 4.9 out of Northeast in St. Petersburg was an all-county, All Sun Coast, all-state and all-district defensive tackle who practically took the handoffs in the backfield. He has developed his game to the point where he is mentioned among the best defensive tackles in the South. As a junior he had 58 tackles, 22 sacks, four caused fumbles and two fumble recoveries, one of which was returned for a touchdown. He is searching for a school that has a strong medical field, high graduation rate for athletes, and early playing time. He bench presses 350 and squats 450. He has a 2.7 GPA and scored 960 on the SAT. He is considering the likes of Florida, Miami, Alabama, Virginia, and Vanderbilt.

Melvin Jackson, tight end, 6-4, 235, 4.7, from Southridge in Miami is one of the most athletic linemen in the Southeast. He has great feet, and can pull, trap, or drive block effectively. He led his team to the 6A state championship game by his dominant play, but did not participate after being removed from the team. Jackson made second team All-Dade County as a junior, a testimony of his ability. He has moved to tight end as a senior in order to utilize his speed more and to apply his blocking ability on the outside. Jackson bench presses 275, parallel squats over 500 and power cleans 275. He has a 2.1 GPA and can qualify. Clemson, Alabama, Florida, FSU and Miami are evaluating him.

Alex Kosman, inside linebacker, 6-2, 240, 4.6, from Ridgeview in Orange Park was a standout defensive end as a junior at Bishop Diego Garcia in Santa Barbara, California, as a sophomore and junior. He moved to Florida last December. As a sophomore he had 70 tackles and 16 sacks, while his junior year produced 90 tackles and a school record 22 sacks. So far during his senior year Kosman has 70 tackles (40 solo), one interception, six caused fumbles and two fumble recoveries in only five games. He calls himself a defensive leader who is vocal, vicious and tenacious. He camped at FSU and registered a 30-inch vertical jump. Kosman benches 405, squats 525, and power cleans 295. He has a 2.6 GPA, an 18 ACT, and a 960 SAT. His step uncle, Pat Riley, played for the San Francisco 49ers, and his great uncle, Alan Bowra, spent a little time with the Oakland Raiders. He lists his top choices as Clemson, Alabama, Florida, FSU, Auburn, UCF, LSU, Duke, Louisville and USE.

Leron Lee, defensive tackle, 6-2, 262, 4.8, from Centennial in St. Lucie is a very quick interior lineman with a low center of gravity, which makes it hard for offensive linemen to get under his pads. He averaged 10 tackles per game as a junior with one sack. Lee doubles as an offensive guard and graded 80 per cent blocking efficiency. He attended the Down and Dirty camp. He benches 330, squats 570, and power cleans 275. He has a 3.1 GPA and scored 830 on the SAT. The schools showing interest are Miami, Syracuse, Alabama, Florida and UCF.

Drew Lunday, offensive tackle, 6-4, 305, 5.5, from Bellevue is another proven offensive tackle who has the size, strength and technique to move in and play strong guard. He is an excellent pass blocker, powerful drive blocker and can lead block if necessary. Lunday is quick at the point of attack and uses his hands well enough to get a separation with the defender. He must improve his ability to effectively block the linebackers if he wants to play early at the next level. Lunday is grading 85 per cent blocking efficiency so far as a senior. He attended the Florida football camp and won the Most Outstanding Lineman Award, plus he went to the Nike Combine in Athens, Georgia. He is a first team all-area selection with a 26-inch vertical leap. Lunday bench presses 370, has a 4.1 GPA, and scored 1060 on the SAT. He is focused on Florida, UCF, USE, Alabama, Auburn and Duke.

Ron Lunford, offensive tackle, 6-5, 320, 5.15, out of Ed White in Jacksonville is a very dedicated player. He transferred to Ed White as a junior from Bishop Kenny but had to sit out due to an academic rule in Florida. Lunford showed his commitment to the game, however, by practicing every day knowing he would not be able to even dress out for the games. His high school coach describes him as "the best offensive lineman we've had at Ed White due to his great feet, powerful body and his dominating ability." Lunford backed up that statement in the jamboree his senior year, standing out in the game so noticeably that several schools extended offers. He ranks among the state's top five players and among the best tackles in the South. He was a pre-season *Florida Times Union* Super 11 pick. Lunford has a 20-inch vertical jump, he benches 400, squats 435, power cleans 255 and dead lifts 525. He has a 2.8 GPA and scored 810 on the SAT. His cousin is Charles Lee who played at UCF and is now with the Green Bay Packers. He lists his lucky seven as FSU, Tennessee, Miami, Alabama, Wisconsin, Auburn and Georgia.

Shawn McCrimon, linebacker, 6-2, 205, 4.5, from Osceola in Kissimmee was the Osceola County Defensive Player of the Year after a stellar junior campaign in which he had 82 solo tackles, 24 sacks, one interception, five caused fumbles and four fumble recoveries (one for a touchdown). He will rank very high among linebackers in the South this year. McCrimon bench presses 315 and squats 455. He has a 3.0 GPA but must raise a low SAT score. He is getting feedback from Georgia

Tech, Florida, Miami, North Carolina, Alabama, Clemson and Syracuse.

Rod Olds, offensive guard, 6-3, 270, 5.1, from Rutherford in Panama City is one of the best offensive linemen in the South. Olds is quick for a lineman, and uses good balance and strength to dominate. He was selected all-county, all-district, and all-state as a junior. He benches 375 and has a 3.2 GPA. Olds will have no problem qualifying. He is an elite lineman who is considering FSU, Alabama, Florida, LSU, South Carolina and Central Florida.

Dan Parrish, offensive tackle, 6-6, 300, 5.2, out of Rickards in Tallahassee is a great run blocker who stays low. He graded at 80 per cent blocking efficiency as a junior. He added 30 pounds. Parrish is continuing to work on his speed because he wants to report to college running 5.0 in the 40. His father, Don Parrish, was a nose guard for the Kansas City Chiefs. He has camped at Down and Dirty, plus Bethune Cookman. Parrish bench presses 310, has a 2.2 GPA and should qualify. He favors Alabama, FSU, Clemson, Tennessee and South Carolina.

Tim Pope, linebacker, 6-3, 225, 4.6, from Rutherford in Panama City is a super linebacker who his coach says has William Witherspoon (Georgia) ability with a Mike Singletary (Baylor-Chicago Bears) attitude. Pope played his junior year at Glen Mills in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He had 85 tackles, 11 sacks, and 14 tackles for loss as a junior. Pope camped at Florida. He bench presses 405, has a 3.1 GPA, and made 16 on the ACT. He is interested in FSU, Florida, Alabama, Miami and Tennessee.

Elvis Smith, outside linebacker, 6-2, 215, 4.45, from Lake Wales racked up over 100 tackles as a junior and was named all-county, all-area, and all-district. His brother, Larry Smith, played at Concord College in West Virginia. He has attended the Bishop Dullaghan camp. He benches 315, squats 415 and power cleans 250. Smith has a 2.8 GPA but no test score is available. He is favoring Miami, FSU, Florida, Tennessee, Michigan State, Alabama, Ole Miss and Vanderbilt.

Josh Snead, offensive tackle, 6-7, 270, 5.2, from Lincoln in Tallahassee is a giant sleeper at offensive tackle with tremendous size and quick feet. He is slightly under-developed strength-wise and he will likely be redshirted at whatever school he selects. Snead benches 260, power cleans 225 and dead lifts 435. He has a 3.0 GPA and scored 1060 on the SAT. He attended the Troy State camp. He is interested in Florida State, East Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Hawaii.

Jason Spitz, defensive tackle, 6-4, 280, 4.9, from Bolles Academy in Jacksonville is originally from Salem, Ohio. He tore a knee ligament as a junior, but is 100 per cent at present. He bench presses 400, squats 615, dead lifts 600, and has a 335 clean and jerk. He had over 50 tackles as a junior with two sacks in just nine games. He is the half brother of Russ Spitz who played at Syracuse. He could play quick offensive guard in college if needed. Spitz has a 3.3 GPA, plus he scored 24 on the

ACT and 1190 on the SAT. He lists his top two as Wisconsin and Alabama followed by Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina and UConn.

David Thompson, defensive end, 6-3, 228, 4.8, from Rockledge had 68 tackles and 11 sacks as a junior and colleges really liked his never-give-up attitude. He shows good technique and he is quick off the ball. Thompson has a 30-inch vertical jump and he is very strong in his legs. He bench presses 265, squats 560, power cleans 255 and dead lifts 455. He has a 2.8 GPA and scored 1070 on the SAT. He camped at Florida. Thompson says Northwestern (offer), Notre Dame (offer), Vanderbilt (offer), Miami, Florida, Georgia Tech, Alabama and Wake Forest have all shown interest.

Ryan Vandervort, offensive tackle, 6-4, 275, 5.1, from Pine Forest in Pensacola has started for three years. Vandervort graded at an 80 per cent blocking efficiency as a junior and was All Northwest Florida and all-district. He has camped at Miami and Georgia. He benches 375, squats 500 and power cleans 300. Vandervort has a 3.63 GPA and scored 18 on the ACT. He is very interested in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Georgia Tech and South Carolina.

Blake Williams, offensive guard, 6-5, 270, 5.0, out of Osceola in Kissimmee is the second big lineman to come from his family. His brother, Brett Williams, is a starter for Florida State this year. He had a setback as a junior with a torn ACL, which caused him to miss the start of last season, but it is 100 per cent now. Williams managed to play in 10 games as a junior thanks to his Osceola team making it deep into the playoffs (semi-finals). He plays in Class 5A and is a very tough run blocker. He made all-county despite missing the first few games, and camped at FSU. Williams benches 370, squats 485 and power cleans 285. He has a 3.3 GPA and is certain to pass the test. He is considering FSU, Clemson, Alabama, LSU and Miami.

John Wilson, offensive tackle, 6-7, 310, 5.1, from Mainland in Daytona Beach is a sensational prospect. Wilson is an All-America nominee who was all-state as a junior. He is a *Pigskin Preps* Super South 75 selection with a vertical jump of 27 inches. He has camped at Penn State, LSU and Georgia Tech. Wilson benches 350, squats 405, power cleans 300 and dead lifts 525. He has a 3.0 core GPA and should qualify. He is considering FSU, Florida, Alabama, Miami, Georgia Tech, Notre Dame, Penn State, Michigan State, Michigan and LSU.

Jonathan Wilson, center, 6-3, 300, 5.0, out of Hillsborough in Tampa graded at 88 per cent blocking efficiency as a junior. He is a first team all-district selection and an honorable mention all-county member. He has a 32-inch vertical jump, benches 365 and squats 620. Wilson is an all-county and all-district selection in track after tossing the shot put 48-8. He attended the Down and Dirty camp. He has a 4.8 GPA (in advanced courses) and scored 1260 on the SAT. Wilson has plans to major in Pre-Med and is looking at schools



Russ Tanner

that feature that field. Wilson is considering Miami, Duke, Georgia Tech, Alabama, Vanderbilt and Iowa.

Georgia

Tabugbo Anyansi, linebacker, 6-1, 207, 4.6, from Mableton's Pebblebrook had 80 tackles (nine for loss), four sacks, one interception, four fumble recoveries and three blocked punts as a junior. Anyansi has camped at Georgia and Georgia Tech. He benches 290, squats 435 and power cleans 290. He has a 3.49 GPA and made 900 on the SAT. Anyansi is looking at Georgia, Florida State, Clemson, Georgia Tech, Alabama, Nebraska and Tulane.

Carlos Bates, defensive end, 6-2, 233, 4.5, from Hart County in Hartwell had a school record 16 sacks as a sophomore and matched that total his junior year. He had 65 tackles, two fumble recoveries, and six caused fumbles in addition to the sacks in 12 games. Despite missing the first three games with a broken foot, Bates made the all-area, all-region, and all-state as a junior. He led his team to the state finals. His cousin, Tim Johnson, played running back at Georgia Tech before transferring to South Carolina. Bates vertical jumps 36 inches and is playing wideout as a senior. He attended camp at Clemson and the 7-on-7 drills at Presbyterian. He is also a power forward on the basketball team, averaging 19 points per game. Bates benches 310, squats 445 and power cleans 300. He likes East Carolina, Clemson, Alabama, Auburn, Georgia and Notre Dame.

Ryan Baynes, defensive tackle, 6-3, 265, 5.13, out of Butler in Augusta plays both offensive and defensive tackle. At times Baynes has played both defensive end and tackle, but his collegiate future will probably be as an offensive guard. He had 67 tackles and caused one fumble as a junior. He attended the Nike Combine (Athens, Georgia) and South Carolina camp. He made All-Richmond County as a junior. Baynes retook some classes in summer school and that has raised his

GPA over 2.5. He has a 790 SAT. Baynes had a bulging disk in his lower back over the summer, which kept him from working out, but he is now 100 per cent. He benches 390 and power cleans 295. He lists his favorites as South Carolina, Alabama, Auburn, East Carolina and MTSU.

Joe Clark, defensive tackle, 6-4, 280, 5.02 from Stockbridge finished his junior year with 68 tackles (13 tackles for loss), six sacks, six batted passes, two fumble recoveries and forced one fumble. Clark is a deep snapper on special teams. He has camped at Auburn, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia and Kentucky. Clark benches 340, and squats 550. He has a 3.3 GPA and scored 17 on the ACT. He lists Auburn, Alabama, Kentucky, Wake Forest, South Carolina, Tennessee and Duke.

Gary "Bubba" Higgins, offensive tackle, 6-5, 305, 5.2, out of Atlanta's Lovejoy is a stellar two-way lineman who will likely end up on offense. He is a four-year starter who was also the state discus champion as a junior with a throw of 159-9. Higgins, primarily a defensive tackle in high school, had 66 solo tackles, 25 assists, and 10 sacks as a junior while making all-region, All-Southern Crescent, and honorable mention all-state. He has a 22-inch vertical jump and has camped at Auburn, Georgia, and Nike Combine (Athens, Georgia). Higgins benches 315, squats 495, and power cleans 265. He has a 2.3 GPA and will qualify. Michigan State, Auburn, Alabama, Miami, LSU and North Carolina are recruiting him.

William Revill, inside linebacker, 6-1, 212, 4.46, from Dougherty in Albany benches 390, squats 680 and power cleans 275. Revill put on a display of strength at the Georgia camp when he repped 185 pounds 44 times non-stop (a camp record). He also camped at Auburn. Revill had over 150 tackles as a junior and was selected all-region, all-area and second team all-state. He was chosen a pre-season All-America as a senior and is so far living up to the billing with 75 tackles, three sacks, two blocked kicks (returning both for touchdowns) and three caused fumbles in half a season. Revill has three touchdowns as a senior (one at fullback, two off blocked kicks). He has a 31-inch vertical jump, a 3.1 GPA and 850 SAT. Revill hasn't shortened his list and is considering Miami, FSU, Florida, UCF, Alabama, Auburn, Georgia, Georgia Tech, Tennessee, MTSU, Ole Miss, South Carolina, Louisville and Notre Dame.

LeKevin Smith, defensive tackle, 6-3, 285, 4.9, from Macon's Stratford Academy is an early candidate for the number one defensive lineman in Georgia. Smith made 68 tackles as a junior with 34 tackles going for loss. He has attended camps at Tennessee, FSU and Nike (Athens, GA). Smith benches 385, squats 455 and power cleans 305. He has a 2.5 GPA and scored 820 on the SAT. He is considering FSU, Georgia, Alabama, Auburn, Nebraska and Tennessee.

Montavious Stanley, defensive end, 6-2, 250, 4.7, out of Dougherty in Albany finished his junior year with 86 tackles, nine sacks, 30 tackles for loss, four fumbles caused and two fumble recoveries. He made All-Southwest

Georgia and all-region as a junior. He attended the Georgia Tech, Auburn and Nike (Athens) camps. He has a 36-inch vertical jump, a 2.5 GPA and he should qualify. Stanley benches 385, squats 530 and power cleans 305. He is showing interest in Georgia Tech, FSU, Alabama, Georgia and Marshall.

Russ Tanner, center, 6-4, 275, 5.17, out of Johnson County in Wrightsville is one of the best center prospects in the South and maybe the best in Georgia. He graded at 89.5 per cent blocking efficiency as a junior. He also starts at defensive tackle and was credited with 89 tackles. He was selected all-area three times, all-region and all-state first team twice. Tanner has a 27-inch vertical jump, and he benches 310 and squats 505. He has a 4.0 GPA and scored 1230 on the SAT. He has camped at Tennessee, Georgia, Clemson and Georgia Southern. He says the schools that catch his eye are Georgia, Georgia Tech, Clemson, Tennessee, Alabama, Auburn and Notre Dame.

Kyle Wallace, defensive tackle, 6-5, 5.0, from Collins Hill in Lawrenceville is a stand-up linebacker in high school but will probably move down to the defensive front in college. He may also get a look at left tackle on offense. A pitcher for the baseball team, Wallace is a versatile athlete. He is originally from Arizona and is already qualified (GPA-3.2, SAT-1050). He is considering Georgia Tech, Georgia, Auburn, Alabama and Clemson.

Kevin Weaver, offensive guard, 6-3, 285, 5.0, from Savannah's Calvary Baptist plays offensive tackle in high school but will move inside to guard or center in college. Weaver was selected all-region, all-area, all-city and pre-season all-state. He is the second cousin of Dusty Ziegler (Notre Dame, Buffalo Bills and the New York Giants) and is distantly related to Justin Smiley (Alabama). He attended the Nike Combine in Athens, Georgia plus the Georgia camp. Weaver benches 325, squats 525 and power cleans 245. Weaver has a 2.25 GPA and scored 860 on the SAT. He is interested in East Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Georgia Southern and Arkansas.

Louisiana

DeAndre Alexander, defensive end, 6-4, 215, 4.5, from Arcadia averaged 12 tackles per game as a junior and had four sacks. He benches 280 and has a 2.8 GPA, but he must raise his ACT score. Alexander camped at Louisiana Tech and they are one of his choices along with Alabama, Arkansas, Texas A&M and LSU.

Jay Ashton, defensive end, 6-2, 250, 4.7, from Ouachita Parish in Monroe could add weight and move inside in college. Ashton has camped at FSU and Nebraska. He had over 70 tackles as a junior and is looking at Nebraska, Georgia, FSU, Alabama, Tennessee, LSU and Miami. He has a 2.5 GPA.

Marquise Hill, defensive tackle, 6-8, 295, 4.85, out of New Orleans De La Salle is the number one defensive tackle prospect in Louisiana and the South. Hill had 118 tackles, 32 tackles for loss and 14 sacks as a junior. He benches 375 and squats over 500. He has a 2.7 GPA and scored 16 on the ACT. Hill has



Marcus Spears

in excess of 50 offers, but the schools catching his eyes are FSU, Michigan, Georgia, Ohio State, LSU, Texas A&M, Alabama, Texas, Georgia Tech and Auburn.

Stanley Smith, linebacker, 6-2, 225, 4.6, from Ferriday is a tough linebacker/defensive end combo player. He had 96 tackles and 13 sacks as a junior. Smith benches 320, squats 470 and power cleans 275. He has a 3.04 GPA and scored 16 on the ACT. He camped at Alabama. He is showing interest in LSU, Alabama, Texas A&M, Tulane and Southern Miss.

Marcus Spears, tight end, 6-5, 275, 4.8 out of Southern Laboratory in Baton Rouge has the hands, mobility, speed, and athleticism. Averaging 21 points and 14 rebounds as a junior, Spears is among the top 100 basketball players in the country, and he would like to try both sports in college. At tight end he snagged 19 receptions for 395 yards and five touchdowns. Spears also plays defensive line, and had 66 tackles, 10 tackles for loss, four sacks and three interceptions. He benches 365, and has a 3.0 GPA, and scored 18 on the ACT. Spears is interested in LSU, Texas A&M, Georgia Tech, Miami, FSU, Ohio State, Florida, Alabama and Michigan

Mississippi

Jimmy Brooks, defensive tackle, 6-3, 240, 4.75 out of Ripley will have to add weight in college, but he already has the physical game. Brooks finished his junior year averaging seven tackles per game. He is rated among the top 40 defensive linemen in the country by one service. He has camped at Ole Miss and Mississippi State. Despite an early offer from Southern Miss, he lists his top three as Ole Miss, Alabama and Mississippi State. He is also looking at LSU, Tennessee and Notre Dame. He benches 290, has a 2.5 GPA and scored 16 on the ACT.

Derrick Duckworth, outside linebacker, 6-1, 228, 4.6 from Mize was credited with 135 tackles and two interceptions as a junior. He says his role model is Shaun Alexander.

Duckworth was an all-area and all-district performer his junior year. He has camped at Mississippi State, Alabama and Auburn. He benches 265, squats 480 and power cleans 265. Duckworth has over a 2.5 GPA. He lists his early favorites as Alabama (leader), Mississippi State, Southern Miss, Auburn and LSU.

LaDaryl Kirkwood, offensive guard, 6-2, 300, 5.0, out of South Panola in Batesville was selected a second team all-state member. Kirkwood has camped at Ole Miss. He benches 365, and he reps 415 on his squats. He has a 2.7 GPA, but has yet to take the test. Kirkwood is the first cousin of Toriano Brown (Marshall) and counts Dwayne Rudd (Alabama-Minnesota Vikings) as a friend. He likes Alabama, Mississippi State, Georgia, Ole Miss, Tennessee, Kentucky and Marshall.

Akeem Lockett, linebacker, 6-3, 235, 4.6, from Ripley had over 80 tackles as a junior. He has camped at Ole Miss and Mississippi State. Lockett benches 300, and squats 425. He has a 3.7 GPA and scored 19 on the ACT. He is considering Stanford, Alabama, Mississippi State, Ole Miss and Memphis.

Jarred McDougle, outside linebacker, 6-1, 230, 4.7, from Clinton had 89 tackles, 31 tackles for loss, three sacks, three interceptions, five pass breakups and four fumble recoveries as a junior, after totaling 79 tackles his sophomore year. McDougle also can vertical jump 36 inches. He benches 405 and squats 600. He comes from an athletic family that includes his brother Carlus (Arkansas) and his father, John (Jackson State, Miami Dolphins). McDougle was selected to the all-metro and all-district team as a junior. He has camped at Mississippi State and has over a 2.5 GPA. He will be heavily sought after by the likes of Alabama (his leader), Mississippi State (second), Florida, FSU, Tennessee, Ole Miss, Southern Miss and Jackson State.

Neal Mead, offensive guard, 6-4, 280, 5.2 from Collins was selected all-district as a junior. He has a 26-inch vertical jump, and he benches 350, squats 500 and power cleans 250. He has camped at Auburn and Jones Junior College. Mead has a 3.7 GPA and has made 19 on the ACT. He expressed an interest in Auburn, Mississippi State, Alabama, Southern Miss and Ole Miss.

Rodney Outlaw, offensive guard, 6-3, 300, 5.1, from Starkville averaged five tackles per game his junior year, but most scouts feel he will become a dominating offensive guard in college. He has camped at Ole Miss. Outlaw benches 350 and carries a 3.1 GPA. He lists his favorites as Ohio State, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, Ole Miss, Mississippi State and LSU.

Jeremy Ruffin, outside linebacker, 6-3, 210, 4.6, from Meridian was credited with 160 tackles, 25 sacks, four fumbles caused, and one fumble recovery as a junior. Ruffin averaged 15 points and 15 rebounds as center on the basketball team. He was an all-region player as a junior. His brother, Dedrick Ruffin, ran track at Mississippi State. He benches 285, squats 495 and power cleans 275. He has a 3.3 GPA. Ruffin lists his top two as Alabama

and LSU, Mississippi State, Southern Miss, Auburn and Ole Miss are also involved.

Chris Spencer, offensive guard, 6-4, 310, 5.3, out of Madison Central is a franchise right offensive tackle in high school who could play tackle or guard in college. Many list Spencer as the state's number one player in 2000. Spencer was selected all-district, all-metro and all-state as a junior. He has camped at Mississippi State, Ole Miss and Tennessee. Spencer benches 350, and squats 716 (new state record). He has a 2.6 GPA. Chris lists his top six as Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Tennessee, FSU, LSU and Alabama.

Cornelius "Tre" Stallings, offensive guard, 6-4, 305, 5.1, from South Pike in Magnolia is also playing part-time on the defensive line this year. Stallings has a 22-inch vertical jump. He was all-county and all-district as a junior. His father, Robert Ray Stallings, played at Southern Miss and in the pros for the Cleveland Browns, New England Patriots, and Green Bay Packers. Stallings has camped at Auburn and Southern Miss. He bench presses 370, squats 625 and dead lifts 290. He has a 3.8 GPA. He lists Florida State, Tennessee, Auburn, Alabama, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Tulane and Southern Miss.

Marcus West, defensive end, 6-3, 225, 4.75, from Columbus was honorable mention all-district after a junior year in which he had 70 tackles and 11 sacks. West also starts as a tight end on offense. He has camped at Mississippi State, Alabama, Ole Miss, Auburn and Southern Miss. Those five schools are the ones he is considering with Southern Miss and Auburn in the lead due to early offers from both. West benches 285, and squats 465. He has a 2.5 GPA and a 17 ACT.

Kendel Wheeler, defensive tackle, 6-3, 270, 4.9, from Petal had 47 tackles, eight sacks, 12 tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery as a junior. He made all-district and he is on track to surpass his junior totals as a senior. Wheeler has 40 tackles through nine games. He vertical jumps 23 inches and has camped at Southern Miss. He benches 375, squats 475, and power cleans 275. Wheeler has a 2.7 GPA and scored 16 on the ACT. His cousin, Kelby Nance, played running back at Southern Miss. He could also move over and play offensive guard or some tight end (where he plays this year). He is considering Southern Miss, Alabama, Mississippi State, Tennessee and Ole Miss.

South Carolina

Charles Bennett, defensive end, 6-4, 210, 4.8, from Camden has a 245-pound bench press. Last year he made 85 tackles and had 10 quarterback sacks while earning all-area and all-region honors. A hard worker in the classroom he has a 2.8 GPA and plans to major in Computer Science in college. Bennett's favorites include South Carolina, Georgia, Clemson, Alabama, Georgia Tech, Tennessee, LSU, North Carolina, North Carolina State and Michigan State.

Steven "Boomer" Creed, offensive line, 6-2, 260, 5.0, from Myrtle Beach is a three-sport athlete. He was a ranked wrestler who also lettered in track (shot put). But this year

Creed turned his attention to football. He has a 350-pound bench press and 465-pound squat. Creed has a 3.6 GPA in honor courses and has scored an 1100 on the SAT. His favorites include Clemson, Duke, Harvard, North Carolina State, Alabama and Furman.

George Gause, defensive end, 6-4, 235, 4.6, from Conway is South Carolina's number one defensive prospect. He is an excellent athlete, having started four years on the football, basketball, and track teams. Gause has won the class 4A state triple jump the last three years. Last year he recorded 88 tackles, seven sacks, six pass break-ups and 12 quarterback hurries. He also starts at tight end. He bench presses 310, squats 365 and holds the school record with a 305-pound power clean. Gause camped at South Carolina, Georgia Tech and Clemson. An excellent student with a 3.4 GPA, he will choose between South Carolina, Clemson, Georgia Tech, Alabama and Tennessee.

Daniel Green, offensive line, 6-5, 320, 5.4, from Dorman in Spartanburg, graded out at over 90 per cent as a junior. During the summer he camped at Clemson and South Carolina. He has a 315-pound bench press and 465-pound squat. During spring practice Green injured his knee and he might need surgery after the season. South Carolina currently leads North Carolina, Alabama, LSU, Tennessee and Clemson.

Demetrios "DJ" Harley, defensive end, 6-3, 265, 4.89, out of Wilson in Florence has impressive strength, bench pressing 325, squatting 450 and power cleaning 245. Last year he recorded 53 tackles, 10 quarterback sacks and two fumble recoveries. He also plays left tackle on offense where he graded 91 per cent and allowed no sacks while starting all 14 games. Harley camped at South Carolina and Clemson and favors those two along with Georgia Tech, North Carolina and Alabama.

James Parker, offensive line, 6-3, 300, 5.2, from Timmonsville has a 320-pound bench press and 400-pound squat. Last year he graded close to 90 per cent and earned all-area honors. During the summer Parker camped at South Carolina and likes them along with Tennessee, Baylor, Alabama and Maryland.

Les "Big Daddy" Rice, offensive line, 6-5, 325, 5.5, from Greenwood helped lead his team to the Division 2 AAAA championship last season. Rice is a good all-around athlete who also throws the shot put and discus on the track team. He has a bench press of 320 pounds and a 450-pound squat. The big man who recorded 30 pancake blocks as a junior camped this summer at Georgia and Georgia Tech and also attended the Nike Prospect Camp. Rice grew up a Gamecocks fan and favors South Carolina along with Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia Tech and Georgia. He has a 3.0 GPA.

Tennessee

Dierre Carter, defensive end, 6-4, 260, 4.68 from Melrose in Memphis was credited with 150 tackles, 20 sacks, and 22 tackles for loss as a junior. Carter has learned from such previous Melrose stars as Kindal Moorehead, David Paine, Dewayne Robertson, and

Mondre Dickerson. Carter has a 38-inch vertical jump and has a 3.2 grade point average. He camped at Kentucky along with several of his teammates. Carter is agile, athletic and aggressive. He is considering Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, LSU, Memphis and Ole Miss.

James Corder, offensive tackle, 6-7, 300, 5.2, from Christ Presbyterian Academy in Nashville is playing on the offensive side of the ball for only the second year. He will be recruited heavily due to the fact that he is huge, quick and still developing. He was all-state. He has camped at Kentucky and Middle Tennessee. Corder benches 375, squats 500 and power cleans 280. He has a 2.25 GPA and scored 22 on the ACT. He is favoring Ole Miss over Tennessee, Auburn, Alabama and Kentucky.

Blake Morris, outside linebacker, 6-3, 235, 4.55, out of Bradley Central doubles as a fullback. At linebacker Morris was credited with over 100 tackles, gaining him honors on the all-region team. His junior year he blasted his way to over 900 yards rushing, including 19 touchdowns. He has camped at Tennessee (twice) and Auburn. His mother, Zandra Morris, played basketball at Tennessee. Morris benches 340 and squats 450. He has a 3.72 GPA and 21 ACT. Morris is interested in Georgia Tech, Auburn, Alabama, Tennessee and Michigan.

John Poe, linebacker, 6-0, 222, 4.5, from Covington is a talented two-way player who has faced adversity (dislocated shoulder and knee injury), but has rebounded to 100 per cent. Poe played only six games as a junior and put up impressive statistics on both sides of the ball. As a fullback he had limited carries but amassed just over 200 yards with five touchdowns. His feature position is at inside linebacker where he racked up 79 tackles, six sacks, two interceptions, caused 15 fumbles and recovered six fumbles. He was selected all-metro, all-region and honorable mention and all-state. Poe has camped at Alabama, Tennessee and Ole Miss. He bench presses 395, squats 500, and cleans and jerks 315. He has a 2.3 GPA and scored 15 on the ACT. He is interested in Tennessee, Ole Miss, Alabama, Arkansas and Michigan.

Steven Ross, offensive guard, 6-5, 265, 4.95, from Christ Presbyterian in Nashville is considered by *Pigskin Preps* to be the most versatile lineman in Tennessee and one of the best in the South. Ross played left tackle as a junior, and is at guard this year, and he has practiced at center. He played on the defensive side of the ball the past two seasons. As a sophomore Ross had 56 tackles, while his junior year he posted 63 tackles, one sack, four caused fumbles and one fumble recovery, which he returned for a 20-yard touchdown. He was all-state and Lineman Runner Up for Mr. Football as a junior. Ross camped at Ole Miss. He benches 280, squats 590, and power cleans 260. He has a 3.25 GPA and scored 23 on the ACT. Tennessee, Alabama, LSU, Ole Miss, South Carolina, Kentucky, Auburn, Vanderbilt, Georgia Tech, Notre Dame, Michigan, Stanford and Clemson are all recruiting Ross.

Bama Hopes To Add More Stars

by Tim Watts

Men's basketball could sign as many as three

In recent years, Alabama has added some top quality players to its men's basketball team. That recruiting process hits another milestone on November 8, the beginning of the week-long early signing period for winter and spring sports. Coach Mark Gottfried is expected to sign a young man who has the skills to join the current group of Tiders. And, as a bonus, he's a point guard who will distribute the ball to his superstar teammates.

Alabama will have four departing seniors to replace with this signing class. Conventional wisdom has it that the Tide will attempt to replace scholarship seniors Jeremy Hays, Tarik London, Doc Martin and Alfred Moss with a point guard, a shooting guard, and two inside players.

The first of those voids will be filled by consensus top 20 prospect Maurice "Mo" Williams. On June 1 Williams announced that he had selected Bama over Georgetown, Indiana and Ole Miss. Last year at Murrah High School in Jackson, Mississippi, Williams averaged 26 points, seven assists and almost five rebounds per game. Williams, who will play point guard in college, has an excellent outside shot to go with good defensive skills. He has recently confirmed his commitment to Alabama. He is expected to be a full qualifier.

Alabama hopes to fill the other available guard position with Earnest Shelton, a 6-3 shooting guard from Memphis. Last year at White Station High School he averaged 21 points and four steals per game. He is an excellent perimeter shooter and is expected to choose between Alabama, where he visited September 11, Wake Forest and, perhaps, Tennessee. He is a fine student with a 3.4 grade point average and 21 ACT score.

With Hays not playing last year, Crimson Tide followers saw the importance of a quality center. Bama is involved with several prospects on the high school and junior college levels.

One of those is seven-foot center Marcus Campbell from Westover High School in Albany, Georgia. Campbell saw his stock rise dramatically during the summer while playing on the AAU circuit with the Georgia

Stars. Campbell has good moves in the paint and is an excellent rebounder and shot-blocker. Along with Alabama he is considering Auburn, Cincinnati, Clemson and North Carolina-Charlotte, which is thought to be the leader. Academic qualifying could be a problem for him.

Another low post prospect considering Alabama is Brandon Bender, a 6-10 power forward from Louisville, Kentucky. Last year he averaged 15 points, eight rebounds, and three blocked shots per game at Ballard High School. He is a highly-regarded big man with a strong body. Despite being almost in the backyard of the Louisville Cardinals, Coach Denny Crum's team is not on Bender's current top five list—a list which has changed frequently. Currently he favors Kentucky over Colorado, Memphis, West Virginia, DePaul and Alabama.

Alabama is considered the early leader for top junior college center prospect Moustapha Diagne from Trinity Valley Community College in Texas. Diagne, who is originally from Senegal, West Africa, is a seven-footer who is an excellent rebounder and shot-blocker. He has not been a good scorer. Although Diagne has already made an official visit to Alabama, he is not expected to sign in the early period. In addition to the Tide, he is considering New Mexico, Mississippi State, Louisville, Oregon and Cincinnati.

Alabama has recently been linked with Pervis Pasco, a 6-9, 220-pound power forward from Pensacola (Florida) Junior College. He was ineligible during the first half of last season, but proved to be a skilled, mobile big man. He is considering Florida State, Kansas State and Cincinnati, as well as Bama, but is not expected to sign until the late period.

One of the more interesting prospects is Eral Kuqo, a 6-10, 275-pound center who is a native of Albania in the former Soviet Union. Although he was academically eligible, he began his college career at Fort Scott Community College in Kansas under coach Chris Beard. Following his freshman year he was eligible to sign with a major college and reportedly made a commitment to Auburn. However, he reneged on that decision and signed with Tulsa. However, when Tulsa lost Coach Bill Self to Illinois, Kuqo elected to return to junior college. Meanwhile, his junior college coach had moved to Seminole Junior College in Florida, and that's where Kuqo is. Last year he averaged 15 points and eight rebounds per game. Florida State and Oklahoma State are Bama's early competitors.

While players are usually excellent athletes and Bama certainly would take one or more in this year's signing class. One interesting prospect is Vytautas Danelius, a 6-7, 210-pound small forward from Park Tudor High School in Indiana. He is a foreign exchange student from Lithuania and something of a sleeper prospect. Among the schools looking at him are North Carolina State, Missouri, Notre Dame, New Mexico and Alabama.

Closer to home, Anthony Vasser of Woodlawn High School in Birmingham will choose between Bama, Auburn, Georgia Tech, and Alabama-Birmingham. He made an official visit to Bama for Midnight Madness on October 13. Vasser is a versatile player, 6-6 with a wingspan of 84 inches, who can play guard or small forward and is considered the top prospect in Alabama. Last year he averaged 14 points and nine rebounds per game while leading his team to the state 6A championship. He is an excellent student with a 3.7 grade point average. Last summer in AAU ball he split time between the Alabama Lasers and Pepsi Select. He saw his stock soar at a Nike Combine in Indianapolis.

As many as three may sign with the Tide.

Bama had been involved with Dwayne Mitchell, a 6-4 shooting guard from New Orleans, and Derrick Stribling, a small forward from Tallahassee. However, Mitchell, after committing to Mississippi State, has said that he will sign with Auburn. And Stribling will choose between Tennessee and Georgia.

While most of the attention is on men's basketball recruiting in this early signing period, all winter and spring sports have the opportunity to add signees. There will be another signing period for these sports beginning in April.

The women's basketball team of Coach Rick Moody has received public commitments from at least two players who intend to sign in November. Donyel Wheeler, a 5-1 point guard from Huffman High School in Birmingham, committed to Bama during her junior season. She was a first team 6A all-state selection year as she averaged 21.3 points per game.

Bama also has a public commitment from Katie Sipe, a 5-10 shooting guard from Coffee County High School in Tennessee.

Bama has also been mentioned with Jessica Pierce, a 6-3 post player from Washington High School in Pensacola, Florida; Debbie Merrill, also a 6-3 post player, from Cumberland City, Tennessee; and Rochelle Bell, a 5-10 guard from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

2000-2001 Alabama Winter Sports Schedules

Men's Basketball

Date	Opponent	CST
Nov. 8	Global Sports (Exh.)	7:00
Nov. 15	Athletes In Action (Exh.)	7:00
Nov. 20	Troy State	7:00
Nov. 25	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	7:00
Nov. 30	Louisville (Fox Sports TV)	7:00
Dec. 4	Grambling	7:00
Dec. 7	Wofford	7:00
Dec. 9	Akron @ Birmingham (Also, Auburn vs. Detroit)	TBA
Dec. 16	North Texas @ Mobile Coors Classic	9:05
(Also, South Alabama vs. Louisville)		
Puerto Rico Holiday Classic @ San Juan		
Dec. 20	Northern Iowa	
(Subsequent games to be determined. Other teams are Clemson, Florida Atlantic, Cincinnati, Youngstown State, American University-Puerto Rico, Washington)		
Dec. 30	Alabama State	7:00
Jan. 2	Southeast Louisiana	7:00
Jan. 6	@ LSU (J-P TV)	12:30 or 3:00
Jan. 9	@ Tennessee (ESPN)	8:00
Jan. 13	Mississippi State (SEC TV)	5:00
Jan. 17	Ole Miss (J-P TV)	7:00
Jan. 20	@ Arkansas (SEC TV)	4:00
Jan. 23	Kentucky (ESPN)	8:00
Jan. 27	Auburn	7:00
Jan. 31	@ Vanderbilt	TBA
Feb. 3	LSU	7:00
Feb. 7	@ Mississippi State	7:00
Feb. 10	Georgia	7:00
Feb. 14	South Carolina	7:00
Feb. 17	Ohio State (CBS)	2:30
Feb. 21	@ Auburn	TBA
Feb. 24	@ Florida (J-P TV)	Noon
Feb. 28	Arkansas (J-P TV)	7:00
March 3	@ Ole Miss	TBA
March 8-	SEC Tournament	TBA
March 11	@ Nashville	

Men's Swimming

Date/UA Score	Opponent	Time (CT)/Opp. Score
Oct. 6	SEC Sectional	Second
127	Florida	110
Nov. 3	@ LSU	TBA
Nov. 17	Auburn	5:00
Nov. 30-Dec. 2	U.S. Open @ Auburn	All Day
Dec. 1-3	Bama Diving Invite	All Day
Dec. 2-3	Bama Open	All-Day
Jan. 6	@ Georgia	1:00
Jan. 19	Florida State	1:00
Jan. 20	Clemson	1:00
Feb. 3	South Carolina	1:00
Feb. 21-24	SEC Championships	All Day
Mar. 3	Last Chance @ Auburn	TBA
Mar. 9-11	NCAA Diving Zones @ Athens	
Mar. 22-	NCAA Championships	
Mar. 24	@ College Station, Tex.	All Day
Mar. 27-	USS National Championships	
April 2	@ Austin, Texas	All Day
April 6-	U.S. Diving Zone	
April 8	@ Orlando	All Day
April 17-	U.S. Diving Championships	
April 22	@ Bloomington, Ind.	All Day

Women's Basketball

Date	Opponent	CST
Nov. 2	Uralmash BC, Russia (Exh.)	7:00
Nov. 9	SBC Prerov, Czech. (Exh.)	7:00
Nov. 17	@ Samford	7:00
Nov. 22	Tulane	7:00
Illinois-Chicago Thanksgiving Tourney		
Nov. 24	California	4:30
Nov. 25	Illinois-Chicago or South Alabama	1:00 or 3:30
Nov. 28	@ South Alabama	7:00
Dec. 2	@ Belmont	2:00
Dec. 6	Memphis	7:00
Dec. 10	Michigan State (ESPN)	TBA
Sun Splash @ Nassau, Bahamas		
Dec. 20	Creighton	6:00
Dec. 21	Eastern Michigan or Oklahoma State	6:00 or 8:00
St. Peter's Holiday @ Jersey City, N.J.		
Dec. 29	Massachusetts	4:30
Dec. 30	Fairleigh Dickinson or St. Peter's	4:30 or 6:30
Jan. 4	Alabama A&M	7:00
Jan. 7	@ Georgia	TBA
Jan. 11	Auburn	7:00
Jan. 14	South Carolina	2:00
Jan. 18	Ole Miss	7:00
Jan. 21	@ Mississippi State	2:00
Jan. 25	@ Kentucky	6:00
Jan. 28	@ Ole Miss	2:00
Feb. 1	Arkansas	7:00
Feb. 4	Tennessee	2:00
Feb. 8	@ LSU	7:00
Feb. 11	@ Auburn	2:00
Feb. 18	@ Vanderbilt	2:00
Feb. 22	Georgia	7:00
Feb. 25	Florida	2:00
March 1-	SEC Tournament	
March 4	@ Memphis	TBA

Women's Swimming

Date/UA Score	Opponent	Time (CT)/Opp. Score
Oct. 6	SEC Sectional	Second
102	Florida	136
Nov. 3	@ LSU	TBA
Nov. 17	Auburn	5:00
Nov. 30-Dec. 2	U.S. Open @ Auburn	All Day
Dec. 1-3	Bama Diving Invite	All Day
Dec. 2-3	Bama Open	All-Day
Jan. 6	@ Georgia	1:00
Jan. 19	Florida State	1:00
Jan. 20	Clemson	1:00
Feb. 3	South Carolina	1:00
Feb. 21-24	SEC Championships	All Day
Feb. 25	Last Chance	10:00 a.m.
Mar. 9-11	NCAA Diving Zones @ Athens	
Mar. 15-	NCAA Championships	
Mar. 17	@ Long Island, N.Y.	All Day
Mar. 27-	USS National Championships	
April 2	@ Austin, Texas	All Day
April 6-	U.S. Diving Zone	
April 8	@ Orlando	All Day
April 17-	U.S. Diving Championships	
April 22	@ Bloomington, Ind.	All Day

Gymnastics

Date	Opponent	Time (CST)
Jan. 8	Super Six Challenge (Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Stanford, Michigan, Penn State)	6:00
Jan. 12	Auburn	7:00
Jan. 19	@ Florida	6:00
Jan. 28	Cal-State Fullerton, UCLA @ Los Angeles	2:00
Feb. 2	LSU	7:00
Feb. 9	Auburn @ Birmingham	TBA
Feb. 16	Georgia	7:00
Feb. 24	Kentucky	7:00
March 3	@ Georgia	6:30
March 17	Penn State, Rutgers, Cornell @ State College, Pa.	6:00
March 23	SEC Championships @ Birmingham	TBA
April 7	NCAA Region IV	6:00
April 19-April 21	NCAA Championships @ Athens, Ga.	

Men's Indoor Track

Date	Event
Jan. 20	SEC Four-Way @ Baton Rouge (Alabama, Mississippi State, Auburn, LSU)
Jan. 26-27	@ Arkansas
Feb. 3	@ Florida
Feb. 9-10	@ Iowa State
Feb. 24-25	SEC Championships @ Lexington
March 2-3	USATF @ Atlanta
March 10-11	NCAA Championships @ Fayetteville

Women's Indoor Track

Date	Event
Jan. 13	Purple Tiger @ Baton Rouge
Jan. 20	SEC Four-Way @ Baton Rouge (Alabama, Mississippi State, Auburn, LSU)
Feb. 27	Illinois Invitational @ Champaign, Ill.
Feb. 9-10	Virginia Tech Invitational @ Blacksburg
Feb. 24-25	SEC Championships @ Lexington
March 2	Florida Last Chance @ Gainesville
March 10-11	NCAA Championships @ Fayetteville

Schedules of Alabama's 2000 Football Opponents

Team	Sept. 2	Sept. 9	Sept. 16	Sept. 23	Sept. 30	Oct. 7	Oct. 14	Oct. 21	Oct. 28	Nov. 4	Nov. 11	Nov. 18	Nov. 25
UCLA Bruins Los Angeles, Calif. (Alabama leads series, 1-0)	ALABAMA 35-24	Fresno State 24-21	Michigan 23-20	@ Oregon 10-29	Arizona State 38-31		@ California 38-46 (3 OT)	Oregon State 38-44	@ Arizona	Stanford	@ Washington	Southern Cal	
VANDERBILT Commodores Nashville, Tenn. (Alabama leads series, 55-18-4)	Miami (Ohio) 30-33	@ ALABA- MA (Birmingham) 10-28	Ole Miss 7-12	Duke 26-7	@ Auburn 0-33	@ Wake Forest 17-10	@ Georgia 19-29	South Carolina 14-30		Florida	@ Kentucky		Tennessee (Adelphi)
SOUTHERN MISS Golden Eagles Hattiesburg, Miss. (Alabama leads series, 30-4-2)	@ Tennessee 16-19		@ ALABA- MA (Birmingham) 21-0	@ Oklahoma State 28-6	Memphis 24-3	South Florida 41-7	@ Tulane 56-24		@ Houston	Louisville	@ UAB	@ Cincinnati	Nov. 24 East Carolina
ARKANSAS Razorbacks Fayetteville, Ark. (Alabama leads series, 7-3-0)	SW Missouri St. (Little Rock) 38-0		Boise State (Little Rock) 38-31	ALABAMA 28-21	Georgia 7-38	Louisiana- Monroe 52-6	@ South Carolina 7-27		@ Auburn	Ole Miss	@ Tennessee	@ Mississippi State	Nov. 24 LSU (Little Rock)
SOUTH CAROLINA Gamecocks Columbia, S.C. (Alabama leads series, 9-0-0)	New Mexico State 31-0	Georgia 21-10	Eastern Michigan 41-6	Mississippi State 23-19	@ ALABA- MA (Tuscaloosa) 17-27	@ Kentucky 20-17	Arkansas 27-7	@ Vanderbilt 30-14	Tennessee		@ Florida	@ Clemson	
OLE MISS Rebels Oxford, Miss. (Alabama leads series, 38-7-2)	Tulane 49-20	Auburn 27-35	@ Vanderbilt 12-7		Kentucky 35-17	Arkansas State 35-10	@ ALABA- MA (Tuscaloosa) 7-45		UNLV	@ Arkansas	LSU	@ Georgia	Nov. 23 Mississippi State
TENNESSEE Volunteers Knoxville, Tenn. (Alabama leads series, 42-33-7)	Southern Miss. 19-16		Florida 23-27	Louisiana- Monroe 70-3	@ LSU 31-38 (OT)	@ Georgia 10-21		ALABAMA 20-10	@ South Carolina	@ Memphis	Arkansas	Kentucky	@ Vanderbilt (Adelphi)
CENTRAL FLORIDA Knights Orlando, Fla. (First Meeting)	@ Georgia Tech 17-21	Northwestern State 19-7	@ Akron 24-35	William & Mary 52-7	@ Eastern Michigan 31-10	@ Northern Illinois 20-40	Eastern Kentucky 34-3	Louisiana- Monroe 55-0	@ ALABA- MA (Tuscaloosa) 2:00 CDT	@ Louisiana Tech	Virginia Tech		
LSU Fighting Tigers Baton Rouge, La. (Alabama leads series, 40-16-5)	Western Carolina 38-0	Houston 28-13	@ Auburn 17-34	UAB 10-13	Tennessee 38-31 (OT)	@ Florida 9-41	Kentucky 34-0	Mississippi State 45-38 (OT)	@ Ole Miss	ALABAMA CRS-TV 2:30 CDT	@ Ole Miss		Nov. 24 Arkansas (Little Rock)
MISSISSIPPI STATE Bulldogs Starkville, Miss. (Alabama leads series, 67-14-3)	Memphis 17-3		Sept. 14 @ BYU 44-28	@ South Carolina 19-23	Florida 47-35	Auburn 17-10		@ LSU 38-45 (OT)	Middle Tennessee	@ Kentucky	ALABAMA TBA	Arkansas	Nov. 23 @ Ole Miss
AUBURN Tigers Auburn, Ala. (Alabama leads series, 37-26-1)	Aug. 31 Wyoming 35-21	@ Ole Miss 35-27	LSU 34-17	Northern Illinois 31-14	Vanderbilt 33-0	@ Mississippi State 10-17	@ Florida 7-38	Louisiana Tech 38-28	Arkansas		Georgia	@ ALABA- MA CRS-TV TBA	

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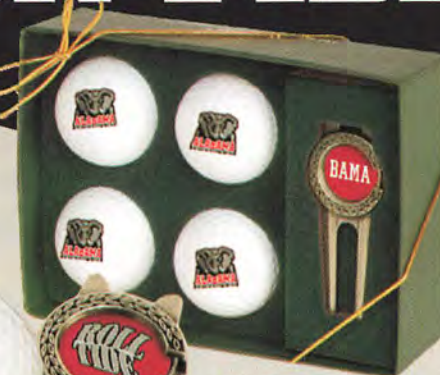


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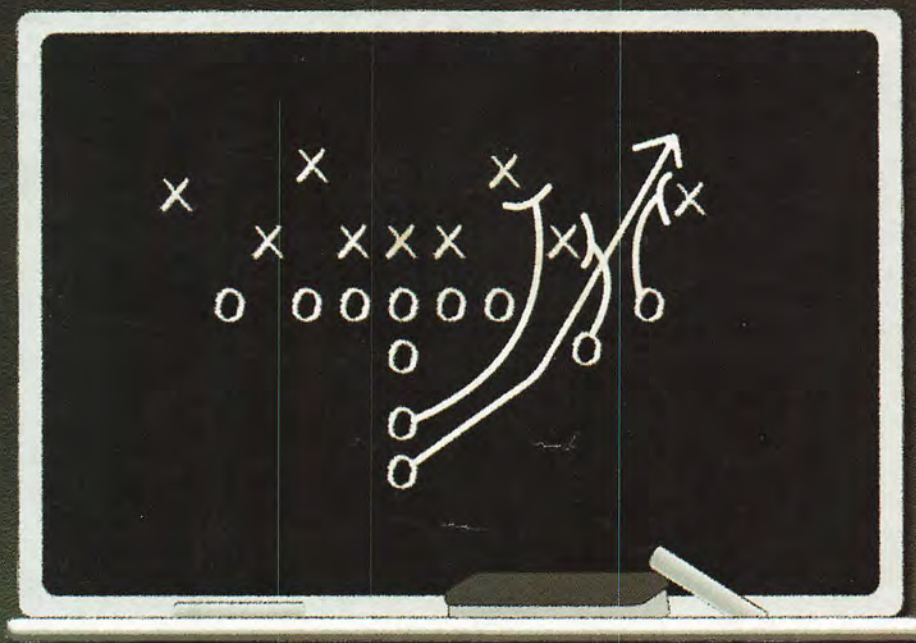
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